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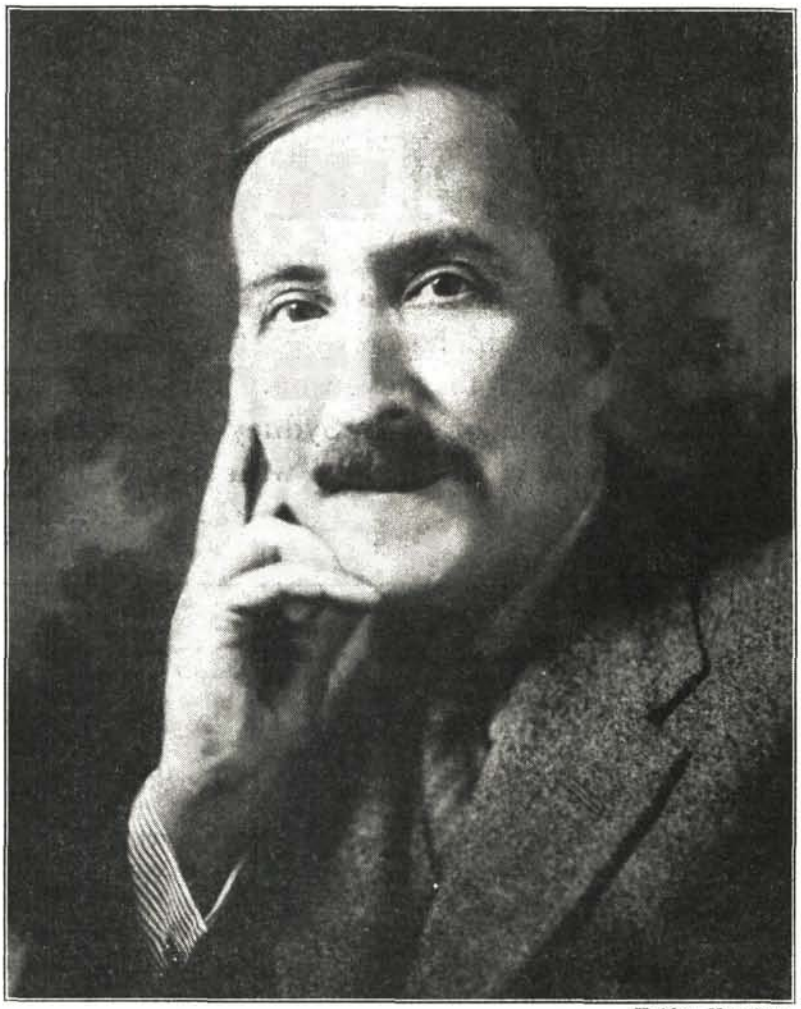

Kaiden-Keystone

STEFAN ZWEIG

"It was good literature as well as good history for Mr. Zweig to avoid sensationalism in his handling of a subject which needed no heightening" . . . *(See page 5)*

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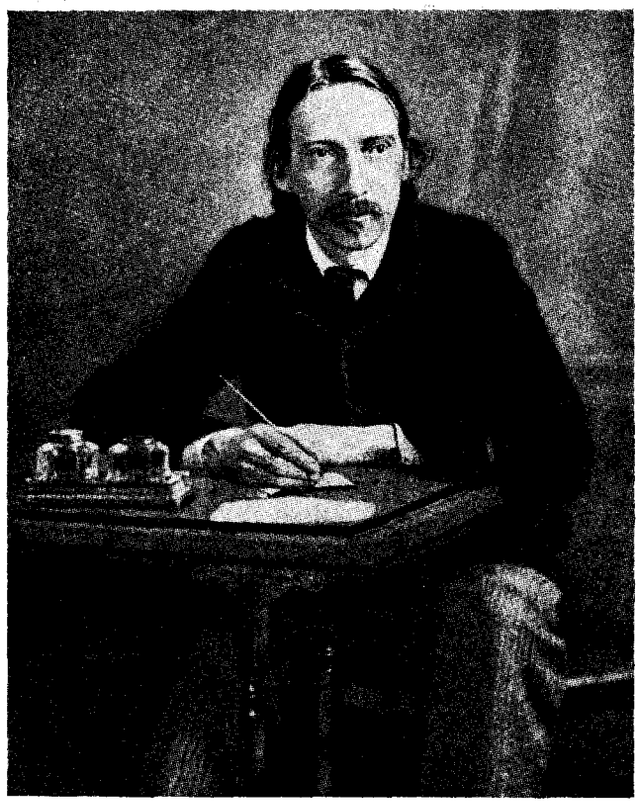
From Stevenson to Pegler

BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

I HAVE been reading this year magazine articles on an encyclopedic range of subjects: articles on Japan in China, on best-sellers, on child psychology, on the technique of war, on undergraduate fiction, on the college curriculum, on who goes to Hollywood and why. And it happens that this year also I have been reading an equivalent series of articles published in American magazines and newspapers a century or less ago: articles on anti-slavery, on the Texan question, on the mill girls at Lowell, on reform, on the protective tariff, on Fourierism, on public schools, on literature in the West. From the first group I have derived much information which I suppose will be useful to me, for these articles were rich in facts. But my chief memory of the second (and earlier) group is, that it was the essay of pure speculation—by an Emerson, or an Orestes A. Brownson, or a Lowell, that seemed to be still alive, with nourishment for the reader still to be found in it. And this encourages me to write here out of the present fashion, which is factual, dogmatic, certain, and indulge in some literary speculation which is intended to stir up thinking rather than to nail that pleasant occupation to the barn door of a supposedly irrefutable fact.



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

What I have to say is suggested by a book published some months ago by the Oxford University Press.* My remarks must not be taken to be an adequate review of Doris N. Dalglish's defense of Robert Louis Stevenson. Yet it is her passionate faith in the style of her master that has stung me into writing. For I, too, was brought up under the aura of Stevenson. I, too, read him aloud, as she advises all to do, in order to savor the delight of his mellifluous sentences. I, too, felt an equal profundity in his moral phrases and in his exquisite description of the dawn which startled the lost princess, Seraphina:—

> Out of the East it welled and whitened; the darkness trembled into light; and the stars were extinguished like the street lamps of a human city. The whiteness brightened into silver, the silver warmed into gold, the gold kindled into pure and living fire; and the face of the East was barred with elemental scarlet. The day drew its first long breath, steady and chill; and for leagues around the woods sighed and shivered. And then, at one bound, the day had floated up, and her startled eyes received day's first arrow, and quailed under the buffet. On every side, the shadows leaped from their ambush and fell prone. The day came, plain and garish; and up the steep and solitary heaven, the sun, victorious over his competitors, continued slowly, and royally to mount.

I do not go all, or much, of the way with Miss Dalglish. I can't believe that "Treasure Island" and the "Child's Garden of Verse" were mistakes, nor that all Stevenson's genius was concentrated in the unfinished "Weir of Hermiston." But as to the beauty of his language I do agree, and what is even more to the point, I do heartily agree that here is a phenomenon in literature common enough in earlier ages, but almost lost in our own time (so little later in years, so much later in philosophy), and hence worth considering with some care. Here was a man utterly devoted to an identification of an entire expressiveness with beauty—and specifically the beauty inherent in language of sound and rhythm. He would not write, he did not write until his violin had become a Stradivarius. No matter what the music he took pains with the tone, as well as with the truth, of the instrument.

Miss Dalglish thinks he was a very great stylist. I do not. I wrote many years ago, when Stevenson's reputation was in bloom, that I believed him to be a euphuist. I still believe it, and in this modern sermon on style I am not proposing Stevenson as a cure for either the dull smoothness of English English as it is written today, or the discords of modern American English. It is the phenomenon that interests me more than the man. If something has dropped out of our style, something never got into his—a basic sincerity. He did not read too much good literature—no writer can—but he heard too much when he came to write. He doubtless got, as Miss Dalglish says, his rhythms from the seventeenth century divines, and also his love of phrase making, which latter accounts for his admiration and frequent imitation of our Thoreau, whose phrase making came from a like intellectual heredity from pulpit thumpers and hell threateners. Both men were lay preachers. But Stevenson's weakness was the error of the eighties and nineties, from which we have escaped with raucous whoops. You will find it in the studied phrases of *The Yellow Book*, witty, mannered, self-conscious. The writer thinks most of how he is going to say it; if he is a minor

* *PRESBYTERIAN PIRATE: A Portrait of Stevenson. By Doris N. Dalglish. New York: Oxford University Press.* 1937. $3.50.

Next Week

THE HIDDEN LINCOLN
By EMANUEL HERTZ
Reviewed by Paul H. Buck

THIS PROUD HEART
By PEARL S. BUCK
Reviewed by Frances Woodward

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writer, any trivial and superficial situation will give him an excuse for a stylistic debauch. If he is a major writer, like Stevenson, he gets quite as intoxicated with words, but the cause is worthy. Only—he *is* drunk, his intention was to get drunk, to be Bacchic, to be Orphic, to be rhapsodic in his attainment of beauty. And as the social drinker goes to the bar, so the self-conscious artist goes to the library in his mind. He begins by playing the sedulous ape, he ends the sedulous man still imitating the cadences of literature, including his own.

He gets beauty because he seeks beauty, precisely as our writers fail to get beauty, even the different beauty of our age, because it is not beauty that they seek. But Stevenson's beauty is often not of its subject, it is borrowed for his subject—a vast difference. I am willing to test the statement with the "wonderful conclusion" of "Pulvis et Umbra" (to quote Miss Dalglish), certainly a piece of writing whose subtle craftsmanship no modern except Mr. Santayana could equal or excel:—

> The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together. It is the common and the god-like law of life. The browsers, the biters, the barkers, the hairy coats of field and forest, the squirrel in the oak, the thousand-footed creeper in the dust, as they share with us the gift of life, share with us the love of an ideal; strive like us—like us are tempted to grow weary of the struggle—to do well; like us receive at times unmerited refreshment, visitings of support, returns of courage; and are condemned like us to be crucified between that double law of the members and the will.

This is not only "absolute pulpit," it is admirable English; yet just as the style-drunk Stevenson was willing to assert a moral sensitiveness for ant and squirrel which Stevenson sober might have balked at, so the false antithesis of browsers, biters, and barkers seems to have much more reference to the sound of the words than to natural history; and the whole passage owes more to the Bible than a great writer ought to owe to anybody or to anything.

Compare the following passage, which, unlike "Pulvis et Umbra" has never been quoted in rhetorics, and indeed occurs in a personal letter never meant to be published. It is from a Thoreau who himself passed through a lengthy process of Stevensonizing before an eye that darted through literature to the life behind showed him (when he remembered to use it) the difference between an attitude and attitudinizing.*

> I left the village and paddled up the river to Fair Haven Pond. As the sun went down, I saw a solitary boatman disporting on the smooth lake. The falling dews seemed to strain and purify the air, and I was smoothed with an infinite stillness. I got the world, as it were, by the nape of the neck, and held it under in the tide of its own events, till it was drowned, and then I let it go down-stream, like a dead dog. Vast hollow chambers of silence stretched away on every side, and my being expanded in proportion, and filled them. Then first could I experience sound, and find it musical.*

Personally, I feel that Thoreau is less "literary" and nearer to true literature than Stevenson. But I am not writing this essay to institute comparisons. For my argument Stevenson is the more useful, since his very exaggeration of style-mindedness emphasizes what we in our time seem to have lost.

For it is nonsense to say that you cannot separate style and subject. Metaphysically you cannot; the matter dictates the style, and the style is formed from it and for it. But physically, or should I say mentally, you can and do. I can think of Sterne's dead donkey as a dead donkey, but I can also think of the English he uses to describe it, as an instrument. Donkey and English had to

WESTBROOK PEGLER

"Too many young writers, lacking his homely genius, want to write like Mr. Pegler."

come together in a just expressiveness or his time would have been wasted, but in his mind he must have held them a little while apart, while he arranged his patterns of words. The rebels against what the rhetorics call "style" of our American times are precisely the Hemingways, the dos Passoses, and I think I shall add the John Steinbecks, who, in dialogue, and in the description of persons, are just as much concerned with expression as was R.L.S.—and, in my opinion, and in their narrower field, much more successful, because of the eye on the object, the greater sincerity and originality. But when they leave dialogue and personal description for ideas, emotions, and all the complexities of civilized life, how often they are crude, or helpless, or merely ugly where a competent ugliness would have been beautiful! Long since they broke through Stevenson's inhibition, who wished he could describe love as grossly as he described the utter fatigue of one of his characters, but a break-away into life they have never had yet. They are useful servants of the great mopping up of the unwashed, impure, unrefined emotions of the masses which Victorian literature so sadly neglected. They concentrate on what was a side issue with Burns and Scott. But they are equally the slaves of the false principle that language should be bound to the limitations of its subject. They avoid overtones because there are no overtones in a bootlegger. They cultivate a brutal simplicity because their characters are brutal and simple. In the same way their colleagues, who do the mass-production middle classes, cultivate a monotony of low-toned style because that is what happens in mass production. And the journalists and the article writers and most of the short-story tellers for the magazines also avoid like the devil any kind of writing to which the terms "felicity," "dignity," "beauty," "sonorousness," "rhythmic," "eloquent," "memorable" could by any possible chance be applied. They don't want their style to be noticed, and thus it becomes unnoticeable. And they are half right, for good style should not be *noticed* in the reading, it should be *felt* and then remembered. And they are half wrong, because if there is no thought for language itself as an instrument, in the writing, it is quite certain that, except for happy accidents, the writing will not outlive the time which inspired it. Will not live, that is, as literature. It is far easier, in our recent fiction and drama, to pick out the many books which have a probability of survival as documents in history or sociology, than the few which may possibly be read with pleasure for their own sake three generations away. Stevenson with all his manners and mannerisms has the better chance.

The defects in our ideals of writing are not to be explained by any such superficial causes as commercialism or the decline of a classical education. They are deep-seated and not too remotely connected with the final triumph of the bourgeois attitude toward life, and the sequent rise of the proletariat. The underlying fallacy is, that in order to express the emotions and the behavior of a new age, expressiveness must be con-

(*Continued on page* 16)

* "In all works of art, widely speaking, it is first of all the author's attitude that is narrated." R. L. S. "The Art of Writing."

*Letter to Harrison Blake. Aug. 8, 1854. "Familiar Letters," p. 231.

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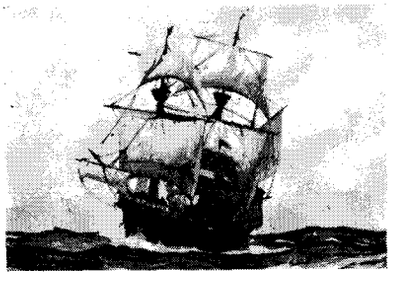
Triumph and Tragedy

CONQUEROR OF THE SEAS: THE STORY OF MAGELLAN. By Stefan Zweig. New York: The Viking Press. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by OLIVER LA FARGE

MAGELLAN'S astounding voyage, with its triumphant outcome secured at the cost of tragedy for the greater part of those who undertook it and for Magellan himself, has long awaited competent, popular handling. Mr. Zweig's fast-reading, colorful narrative is worthy of its subject. One is astonished that this story had not been thus treated before, and grateful to the writer who has done it so fittingly.

Magellan's voyage is peculiarly fitted to the school of popular historical writing which is given to free-hand interpretations and semi-fictional reconstructions of incidents to which there was no witness, since the source material on it is so scanty, and so little detail is known of Magellan's whole life, that imaginative reconstruction is necessary for a coherent tale. In contrast to the somewhat hysterical search for melodrama in an undertaking chock full of true drama which characterizes the recent "Death Sails with Magellan," "Conqueror of the Seas" is fairly uniformly credible and makes a convincing picture of the great navigator's character and motivations.



Jacket design by Gordon Grant for "Conqueror of the Seas."

It must be said that the author is overkind to Magellan, and certainly falls down in his attempt to contrast him as a completely humane conqueror with the overblackened characters of Cortez and Pizarro (not that there is much of anything good to be said for Pizarro). Having described the brutal trickery by which the two Patagonians were captured, it is hardly consistent for the author to state that his hero never broke faith with any native peoples. At times he frankly admits Magellan's faults, and the documentation of the book itself serves to correct some of the explanations offered to justify his less attractive actions.

It was good literature as well as good history for Mr. Zweig to avoid sensationalism in his handling of a subject which needed no heightening. He is to be congratulated on resisting the temptation to exploit some of Pigafetta's more exotic information on the love life of the East Indies.

This is not a definitive historical work, but it is a roaring good narrative based on sound knowledge, delightful to read, and one which will bring to life one of the great characters of history, whose name has been familiar to all since early school days, but who has never been to us more than a name and perhaps a vague memory of a woodcut showing a man with a beard, dressed in the costume of a long forgotten period.

Sweet At Manassas

BY LYSBETH BOYD BORIE

NOW on the heart breaks the incessant call
Of Shenandoah in the last, bright fall.

High on the sun the sapphire ridges lie
Folded to velvet on the winding sky

The foothills crimsoned with the angry gash
Of sumach and the paler scar of ash.

The vaulted elms less sombre and remote
Flaunt the bright scarf of creeper at the throat.

Now the young colt with thunder on its mane
Runs the red meadows of the Piedmont plain.

Now the old blood lost on this country side
Gushes to apples in a scarlet tide.

Winesaps are sweet in the October sun,
Sweet at Manassas, sweeter at Bull Run.

Only the bright shock troops of corn remain
To sentinel these quiet fields again.

EDWIN LANHAM

Poignant Phantasm

ANOTHER OPHELIA. By Edwin Lanham. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

JOHN STEINBECK in "Of Mice and Men" has recently given fresh proof of what the story of novelette length can do in the hands of a forceful writer. And now here is Mr. Lanham with "Another Ophelia" to show once more what poignance of emotion it can achieve when properly focussed. Like Mr. Steinbeck, Mr. Lanham has several strings to his bow, and his work arouses an eager interest not only because of its specific merits but as well because of its variety. An earlier book, "The Wind Blew West," was a saga of pioneering Texas which had the tang of the unsettled West in its bustling pages; the next, "Banner at Daybreak," veered between Texas and Paris and between an effective realism and a somewhat incredible romanticism; both were excellent in part and would have profited by pruning. "Another Ophelia" is a tight-knit, direct, but powerful story, held rigidly within the stream of consciousness method, which develops a mounting suspense until it attains a nightmarish quality. It is a thoroughly artistic performance.

The story ostensibly covers the span of five days, beginning on a Friday and ending on the following Tuesday, but in actuality it begins twenty years before the events which reach their climax in it. It is the chronicle of Julie Bogart, who at thirty-seven lives in a world of amorous imaginings, afraid of passion yet craving it, the pitiable victim of an experience which is never fully revealed until the end of the book. The story is unfolded through the musings of three persons: Kate, Julie's mother, unwilling fully to face the actuality of what has happened to her daughter; Julie herself; and her father, Tol Bogart.

Mr. Lanham's narrative marches forward with a beautiful economy of in-

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cident and a constant tightening of tension. The first part of the book, in which Julie is seen through the eyes of her fiercely protective mother, and the second, in which the daughter—whose nerves have given way while watching a movie that touches some chord of memory—is shown as the victim of her own excitement, pile up a sense of almost intolerable pity. And Mr. Lanham's artistry is nowhere more evident than in the manner in which Tol Bogart takes on personality and pathos until at the end the story is almost as much his as Julie's.

"Another Ophelia" has a directness, a sincerity, a convincing quality that wake not only horror but profound compassion. A bitterly tragic book, it yet has a kind of painful beauty which comes of the pity which, though the author keeps himself sternly out of his narrative, invests his tale. Those who read it will await Mr. Lanham's next book with interest.

Preparing for War

THE CAISSONS ROLL: A Military Survey of Europe. By Hanson W. Baldwin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by R. Ernest Dupuy, Major, F.A., U. S. A.

THE crass ignorance of war and things military amongst those newspaper men developed since the World War has made easy the task of propagandist and censor during the turmoil abroad these last two or more years. Operating in a milieu with which he was unfamiliar, further cramped by the impossibility of adequately seeing for himself and utilizing his trained "nose for news," the reporter covering the military world in general, or specifically Ethiopia, Spain, or China today, has been hard put to it to draw accurate word pictures even if able to get them past the censor. As result some ludicrous situations were thus developed, some entirely erroneous conclusions forced on the credulous public.

On the contrary, had Hanson W. Baldwin's reputation for military knowledge and accurate reporting preceded him in his late trip to Europe, a general alarm might well have gone out—, "A chiel's amang ye takin' notes, and faith, he'll prent it." This Naval Academy graduate and capable member of the *New York Times* staff has turned out an interesting and readable résumé of military conditions in Europe as he saw them.

Much of the matter contained in "The Caissons Roll" is reproduced from Baldwin's special articles published in the *Times* during and just following his trip. But it has been polished and edited in the light of reflection, and of reference to authoritative technical background. Summed up, Mr. Baldwin's opinion, as he surveys a Europe "spending almost $20,000 a minute on direct armaments expenditures and probably another $10,000 or more every sixty seconds for indirect tribute to Mars," is that war is inevitable and he even goes so far as to date it—"probably"—in the 1940s.

Spectacularly enough, he opens in Czechoslovakia, with the hum and roar of the great Skoda arms works ringing in the reader's ears, the flare of forge and foundry in the mind's eye. Step by step the author leads one through Europe. with sufficient economic and financial commentary on the purely military recapitulation to balance the account.

On so controversial a subject it would be impossible for any author to avoid clash of opinion. For instance, his conclusion that French training is based upon a "war of position," and that penetration of the Maginot Line might "catch the French by surprise," is hardly compatible with the French General Staff doctrine of the elastic defense. Also, his characterization of the French soldier as "psychologically and strategically . . . a defensive fighter," is at variance with historical fact. More emphasis too, might have been placed on French barrier fort strength along the Italian Alpine frontier.

Mr. Baldwin's analysis of the effect of Jutland upon the British navy, with consequent loss of the "Nelson touch," and the detrimental result on officers and men, is excellent. He points out that England is now well on the way to take that touch of palsy from Britannia's trident-arm. His summaries of the German and Italian military machines and capabilities are shrewd and well taken.

All in all, "The Caissons Roll" is an excellent piece of reporting on a subject of international news interest. The book contains a number of strength tabulations, and a frontispiece for general orientation.

An Icelandic Boyhood

SHIPS IN THE SKY. Gunnar Gunnarsson. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by Katharine Simonds

HERE is the freshness of spring in the countries where winter is long and the soil stony, well matched with the freshness of a childhood sheltered from stupidity and cruelty. Uggi Greipsson, the Icelandic child whose autobiography is Gunnarsson's own, is only eight when the story ends; his life has been narrow and simple, he has known but one crisis, his mother's death, but what he has seen is fully realized with the unfaltering perception of the child, and even at so young an age, he has reached a certain maturity. At eight, he has no dread of the future, no fatalism, but neither has he any delusion of escaping the usual course of human life; from the day on which he realized that his mother was dying, "in the depths of my mind, a cold destiny had been sealed and accepted."

GUNNAR GUNNARSSON

"Ships in the Sky" is a picture of the unfolding of the child's mind: the enormous incidents that make up the pattern of his daily life; and the author is for the most part a faithful interpreter, though like all other adults, he cannot always escape a false pathos. (For who would not exchange the child's vulnerability for the excitement with which he awakes to each new day, or the well-being which absorbs him when he comes into a kitchen steaming with the smell of new-made bread?)

Because Gunnarsson can make his readers feel again the sensations common to all children, he is able to make the unfamiliar background of Iceland credible also. It is a sort of feudal society in which Uggi lives; though his father is a prosperous farmer, he lives on almost paternal terms with his servants.

The world of the trolls is as actual to Uggi as the seen world; and with the sense of magic, there is present also a strong religious feeling. Surviving, too, from an earlier day, is the bardic tradition. Simon Daleskind, the tramp, is a contemporary skald, who improvises verses and sells them for his living; and many other characters retain an unselfconscious capacity for dropping into rhyme. Often their songs recall our English nursery rhymes—particularly this Christmas song, precisely in the rhythm and spirit of Bow Bells, beginning:

'Tis now midnight, says the cow that is white;
So it's time to chat, says the cow that is fat.

Uggi's world is peopled with strong and crotchety characters. His mother is the only one who can always be relied upon, but they all have a sort of country integrity, from old Begga the cook, who lives by harsh homilies, to Uggi's baby sister, from whose cradle comes "the sound of comfortable breathing, substantial and decided, like the whole of her little person." It is a book hard to get into; but once one has submitted, one feels for it a strong affection and respect.

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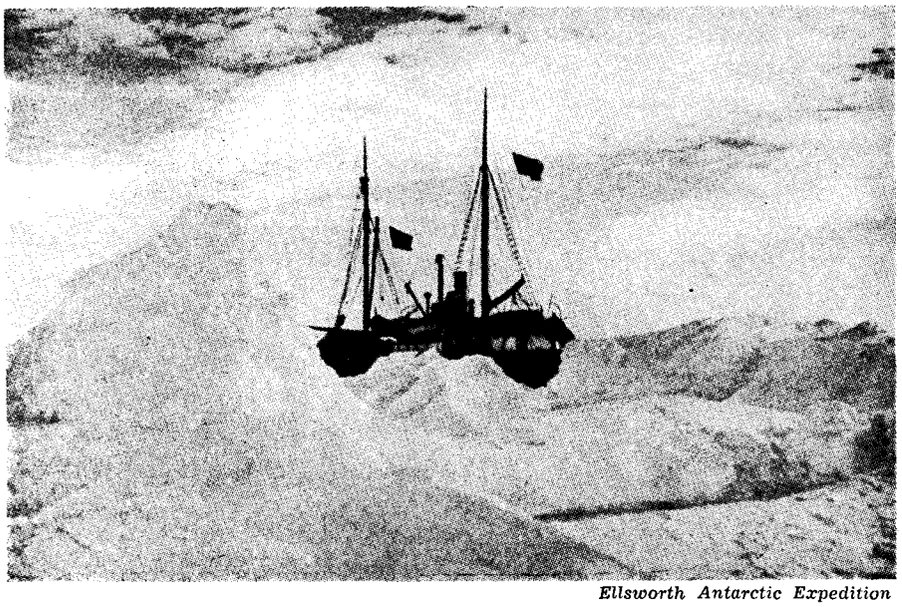

Ellsworth Antarctic Expedition

BELIEVING HER OWNER "LOST," THE *WYATT EARP* FLIES SYMBOLS OF GRIEF. *From "Beyond Horizons."*

Self-Made Explorer

BEYOND HORIZONS. By Lincoln Ellsworth. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

LINCOLN ELLSWORTH may not be remembered as among the greatest explorers, but he has contributed more than most—who are essentially adventurers—to our knowledge of far places and the ancient forces that have made of them the wildernesses they are today. His conquests, as shown by this book, are less geographical than personal. He had been a frail and timid boy who played with dolls until he was thirteen years old, the heir to great wealth that might have spoiled him. It would have been easy to accept a patrimonial sinecure, but there was blue ice in the heart of the boy Lincoln, and his dreams led him north. His training as a surveyor and engineer first in British Columbia and then in his father's Pennsylvania coal mines prepared him to offer expert assistance to Amundsen on the first attempt to fly to the North Pole. They failed because Amundsen's plane broke down, and Ellsworth, misinterpreting the other's signals, was forced to land on treacherous ice.

ELLSWORTH—*with icicles on his beard.*

It is a story of heartbreak and exhaustion that he tells here. Slaving on half rations and with inadequate tools—a pocket axe and four wooden shovels—they built ramps and beat down a runway to move the one navigable plane. "Polar nerves" had developed in them all before they finally got off. Ellsworth tells candidly of his own irritability, even of the torments he inflicted upon the weakest member of the expedition, whose sole sin was that he dropped his crumbs.

His next polar adventure was the flight of the dirigible *Norge*, also with Amundsen, from Spitzbergen to Alaska, a trip that was scientifically disappointing because fog obscured their vision. They did, however, ascertain that no land lay between Alaska and the Pole.

After a period spent in Labrador, Colorado, and California discovering fossil algae and "fossil raindrops," he set off again for the ends of the earth, this time with Sir Hubert Wilkins as technical assistant. His first effort to fly across the Antarctic continent was unsuccessful, but his second took him and the pilot Hollick-Kenyon from Depression Island to Byrd's abandoned camp at Little America. The recurrent horror of "Polar nerves" awaited him there, when, without glasses and with nothing to do till the arrival of the rescue ship, even the gurgle of Kenyon's pipe became maddening.

It is in Ellsworth's ability to tell how and what an explorer feels that the chief interest of his book lies, for a great deal of it is dull or prolix, and his scientific contributions are already well known. Vain of his prowess as a wrestler, walker, pioneer, and eater of sheep, he none the less emerges as a most sensitive human being; and, remarkable among his kind, he is a self-made explorer who has paid his own way.

Bribing Fate

BOW DOWN TO WOOD AND STONE. By Josephine Lawrence. Boston: Little Brown & Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

ABANDONING her recent excursion into the field of sociological fiction, Miss Lawrence in this new novel directs her skillfully ironic pen against her own sex. Women, she says, are too apt to make bargains with Fate, setting up some idol to which they can conveniently sacrifice—not, of course, without expecting in return a full measure of happiness, or love, or some other thing held dear. Her plot traces the influence of these curiously persistent tribal rites in the lives of three sisters, middle-aged and middle-class Americans.

Seneth, Brosia, and Gillian (where, by the way, does Miss Lawrence find such ineffable names for her feminine characters?) are not at all alike, but each believes herself to be leading a life of self-sacrifice. Seneth, a widow, lives only for her four children, but demands an impossible reward of devotion from them in return. Brosia for similar reasons has paid for her husband's medical training, sought to make him a successful specialist. Gillian, the plain one of the family, offers little daily sacrifices of good deeds in the hope that she may be allowed to retain the secretarial job which is the center of her existence. However, as the three sisters age, children and husband break away, and Gillian's place in the office is filled by a younger woman in spite of her attempts to bribe Fate. By the end of the book all three women are disappointed and alone. The author points the moral through her mouthpiece, the sole male playing an important part in the story: sacrifice, to have value, must be made without thought of recompense.

Disregarding the objections of psychology to this thesis, it is obviously well calculated to infuriate and interest feminine readers. It is not, however, strong enough to bear unaided the weight of Miss Lawrence's somewhat undramatic narrative. Unfortunately there is little else in the book, which consists essentially of three lengthy character sketches. Two of them are conventional enough, and though they now and then permit the author to display her shrewd wit, memories of "The Silver Cord" and "Craig's Wife" will not down. Stoutish, trustful Gillian on the other hand is one of Miss Lawrence's best and most affecting portraits, neither sentimentalized nor made grotesque. While many passages bear the stamp of the author's own particular brand of healthy and readable realism, the book as a whole seems overexpanded and unlikely to be ranked with her best work. As an iconoclast Miss Lawrence lacks conviction and force, perhaps because she herself has set up the images she is seeking to demolish.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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The Second Step

EVER since we discussed "The Growth of the American Republic" letters have been coming in asking us to go on from there and draw up a general reading list in American history. It is an impractical request and any attempt to comply with it would interfere with a project we have in mind, which is to formulate a set of minimum requirements for the literary persons who interpret America to this patient generation. That project will list some reliable, detailed outlines of events; a few necessary, pivotal books such as "Commerce of the Prairies," "The Impending Crisis," "The Communistic Societies of the United States," and "Progress and Poverty"; and some authoritative treatises on matters that the literary have heartfelt but wholly unwarranted opinions about. Our article will deal at greater length with the books we mention this week, but until we get space for it we can only print the suggestions we have been making privately to our correspondents.

People who ask for such a list want, we believe, more of the general facts of American history and a better basis for specialized reading about topics that appeal to them. They want what they describe as a thorough grounding. Unhappily a thorough grounding implies some preliminaries that no one can take much pleasure in. Maps, for instance. The average reader supposes that a map is something designed to show the boundaries of states and the location of rivers and cities, but the student of history has much less use for topographical maps than for the graphic representation of interrelationships — such interrelationships, for instance, as those among racial origins, economic interests, and political alignments. Studying maps is dreadfully tiresome but it is indispensable to clear ideas. What is worse, there is no adequate map book of American history for laymen. The serious student has to dig for what he wants.

Reading in geography and physiography is also pretty deadly, especially for those who think of our history as composed of the witchcraft delusion, the California gold rush, and the class struggle—but it is another inescapable preliminary to intelligent ideas. The American continent is the only absolute in American history, and one must understand why and how. A standard text is Semple's "American History in Its Geographic Conditions," which was revised in 1933 by Clarence F. Jones. It is not likely to draw anyone from the chimney corner on a winter night but it is a fixture on our list, and it must be supplemented by such a book as Isaiah Bowman's "Forest Physiography," which is more difficult and more exhaustive. Sorry, but there is no detour. There remains, however, only one further pedantry: some acquaintance with a "source book." It is absurd to think furiously about the Stamp Act, the Crittenden Resolutions, or the "due process" clause without finding out exactly what they said. Otherwise you get as tangled in misconceptions and misquotations as a liberal journalist or an assistant Attorney General. Such a book is not to be read but to be kept at hand and constantly referred to. There are half a dozen good compilations; we recommend Commager's "Documents of American History."

The other necessity is to get a detailed knowledge of the main current of American history, its chronology, its series and sequences, its principal energies, and their relationship to one another—the important events and developments since the beginning, and the complex of forces that produced them. That implies a long, detailed history, written from the broadest possible base—and that means, today, "The History of American Life." This series is not yet complete—two volumes covering the years 1763-1830 are still unpublished—but the ten volumes already published have superseded all other general histories of the United States. Some of the individual volumes are better than others but the whole is the best large-scale history we have ever had. It embodies the findings of the social historians, who utilize many more aspects of the national experience than any of their predecessors did, and constitutes this generation's most carefully wrought and most informed judgment on our past. It is a necessity for everyone who is seriously interested in American history—the best frame of reference for historical ideas and the best preparation for specialized reading.

The irreducible minimum has now been stated. The most fruitful way to supplement it is to acquire the Yale University Press's "Pageant of America," which is surely the most fascinating text in American history ever compiled. It is primarily a pictorial history, a rich collection of maps, drawings, paintings, photographs, and cartoons assembled from every age and area and illustrative of every aspect of the American past. Merely to turn its pages is to learn a lot of history, and used intelligently it makes a magnificent commentary. It visualizes history and warms it with the sense of common life, of human kinship continuing through the generations, that more formal histories tend to sink under abstractions. The accompanying text is usually a running commentary on the illustrations, though frequently packed with unusual information, and varies in usefulness. Apart from the illustrations, such volumes as those on art and literature are not particularly valuable since the same material is readily available elsewhere. But "The Annals of American Sport" is an original contribution of the greatest value, the volumes on colonial times and the expansion of the West have a new and very convenient arrangement, and three volumes in particular, "The Epic of Industry," "The March of Commerce," and "Toilers of Land and Sea" put at the disposal of the student material he will not get from any general history. The set is expensive but its value increases with use—and it is a family possession on which the imagination of one's children can feed for years.

Such a core as this is essential to the formation of accurate ideas about American history. It is easy enough to name the great forces in our past: the process of adaptation that transformed a colony of Europe into the American nation, the cleavages of interests and institutions that made the sections, the unoccupied land which produced the westward expansion and transmutation, the division over slavery, the development of industrialism, the technological revolution, the organization of finance, the achievement of world power, and the collision with the European system. It is easy, too, to name less measurable forces that have acted on all these: the changing ratios of natural resources, the momentum and interference of social movements, the proliferation of native institutions, the aberrations and disequilibriums of a system always in process of dynamic change. What is not easy is to keep all the others in mind when dealing with any one of these. But no one may have trustworthy ideas about our history, and no one may successfully follow a course of intensive study, unless he contrives to keep clearly in mind the relationship which each one has with the others. The historical assertions of publicists, politicians, and literary people are usually grotesque for just that reason: they make simplicities of the infinitely complex, they issue from an honest ignorance of the supporting structure. The first necessity of the student is to learn how complex the past is —and the next necessity is to sift out from it as much information as possible. When you have realized its complexity, acquired dependable information about it, and perceived that its parts are related and relative to one another, you have begun to make progress in history.

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Letters to the Editor: *Critics and Frost; Constance Holme*

Mr. Blackmur's Review

SIR:—Though not unaccustomed to superlatives in your columns, it seemed to me that perhaps a new record had been made by your characterization of Blackmur's review of Frost's last book: "His piece in the *Nation* may not be quite the most idiotic review our generation has produced, but in twenty years of reading criticism—oh, the hell with scholarly reservations, Mr. Blackmur's *is* the most idiotic of our time. It is one of the most idiotic reviews since the invention of movable type."

On verifying my impression of that review (*Nation*, June 24, 1936) it struck me again as a thoroughly serious, if constricted and somewhat fumbling effort to define some of Frost's limitations in his further range into political and social poetry. Its tone can be suggested by these sentences: "As bad religious poetry versifies the duty of an attitude toward God, bad social poetry versifies the need of an attitude toward society. Both the duty and the need may be genuine and deeply felt—it is our stock predicament and the great source of fanaticism and deluded action—but before either attitude can become poetry it must be profoundly experienced not only in intention but in the actuality of words."

Although such remarks do not correspond to your opinion of Frost, it should not blind you to the fact that Blackmur's criticism of poetry has been consistently characterized by close and patient attention to the rhythm and meaning of the words themselves, not by tub-thumping and windy declarations.

F. O. MATTHIESSEN.

Harvard University,
Cambridge, Mass.

Quercus's Quest

SIR:—If tracking down one reader of some of Constance Holme's books will satisfy Mr. Quercus then he can quit his huntin', for three or four years ago I read "The Splendid Fairing," "The Lonely Plough," and "Trumpets in the Dust"; not only read them but infected a few others with my enthusiasm.

I first came across Constance Holme in an Oxford University Press advertisement in the *SRL* which said she was the first living author—at that time—to be included in their World Classics.

What I've been hunting for since I've read her books is someone who knew of Constance Holme and her books when they were first published. How did they escape attention then and how did they happen to be discovered, or re-discovered, within the last few years?

W. D. HANBRIDGE.

Schenectady, N. Y.

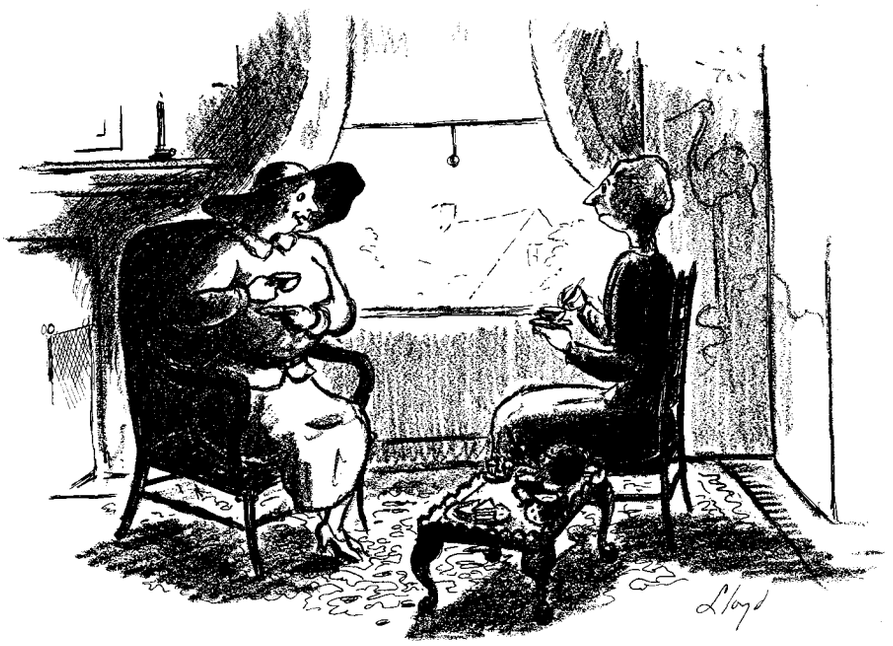
Semantics

SIR:—Hasn't Crane Brinton twice sinned by omission in his review of Stuart Chase's "The Tyranny of Words"? In the first place, he "presumes" that certain abstractions are semantically and operationally meaningless (but cf. P. W. Bridgman: "The Nature of Physical Theory," Chapter II); and then he neglects to observe that abstractions are confusing only when they are used as though they had objectively determinable referents.

In the second place, after saying that most of us recognize the figurative nature of Plato's figure of the cave, he fails to observe that Plato used this figure in an epistemological discussion.

S. A. NOCK, *Vice-President.*

Kansas State College,
Manhattan, Kansas.



"HE'S MARVELOUS. MENTION ANY SUBJECT, AND MR. VAN LOON WILL WRITE A BOOK ABOUT IT."

Dernière Chemise

SIR:—The translation of "Love's Last Shift" by "La Dernière Chemise de l'Amour" noted by Christopher Morley pairs well with the transformation of "A Chest of Drawers" into "Une Poitrine de Calençons" noted by another Morley, to wit, the Rt. Hon. John.

HANK ANGELL.

Palo Alto, Cal.

"Gardener Who Saw God"

SIR:—I was surprised by your peevish review of "The Gardener Who Saw God." The book is no doubt full of "stuff and nonsense," as your reviewer declares, but he neglects to point out that it is nonsense of the Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll type. Personally, I got a great deal of enjoyment out of the book, and it seems to me that it was unfair of your reviewer to be so categorical in his derision.

MARION WEST.

Los Angeles, Cal.

C-Plus Fiction

SIR:—Your editorial on "C-Plus Fiction" naturally brings up the question of "The Prodigal Parents."

Now I spent two and a half good United States dollars for Mr. Lewis's book—depreciated dollars, I admit, but not nearly as depreciated as what I got in exchange for them. And I feel it is a serious matter when someone in such a high literary position as Mr. Lewis offers to the public under his trademark a product of such inferior grade. If Ford offered the world a model of comparable weakness, the fires of righteous wrath would burn the topless towers of Manhattan; we have a right to expect a certain minimum performance from a car we buy, and I think we have the same right in regard to the books of someone like Mr. Lewis.

A. S. MOLLOY.

New York City.

Composition at Mount Holyoke

SIR:—In *SRL*, January 15, Professor Mirrielees writes, "Leaf over a dozen college catalogues for the year 1900, and you will find elementary composition, now and then a course in argumentation. Nothing else."

In 1900, as ever since, Mount Holyoke College had a substantial department in English (Composition) independent of the department of English literature.

MARY L. WHEELER.

Boston, Mass.

Latin America

SIR:—I am making a study of Latin America, and find that the subject is not too well covered in current books. May I ask your readers for suggestions as to articles and books in which I may obtain further material? I am interested in all aspects of the subject—South America, Mexico, Central America, the Spanish West Indies, their cultural, economic, and political structures.

R. A. MAGER.

340 Townsend Ave.,
New Haven, Conn.

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Ed Howe versus Time

BY WILBUR L. SCHRAMM

E. W. HOWE

LET this at least be said as obituary for Ed Howe: that he had a legitimate quarrel with time and uttered never a word of complaint during eighty-four years.

He built a career which, a century before and under the right conditions, might have made him known as another Benjamin Franklin, but which in his own day made him merely a five-cent Carnegie. He was ensaged, as the Sage of Potato Hill, only at a time when bankers and politicians had become far more important to American life than wise men. He wrote one of the significant books of a literary movement thirty years before the movement started; by the time it had caught up with his book, his philosophy was no longer in sympathy with the movement; and now, in the winter of his death, there are unmistakable signs that the country is coming around once more to his way of thinking.

Of these three anachronisms the last is the most serious, for it becomes more and more clearly apparent that Ed Howe will be remembered not as a sage, nor a self-made man, nor an editor, but as an interpreter of the village and author of "The Story of a Country Town."

Set his topsy-turvy history, for a minute, beside the career of that other interpreter of the small town, Mr. Sinclair Lewis. Mr. Lewis published "Main Street," in 1920, when Spoon River and Winesburg were already places well known and when the country was in full tide of what Mr. Carl Van Doren called "The Revolt from the Village." He published "Babbitt," two years later, at a time when the problems of business and advertising were central in his readers' thinking. "Arrowsmith" came when biological research had already been dramatized for the layman, when phagi and serums had entered the headlines. "Elmer Gantry" appeared at the height of the sacrilegious twenties. And so on throughout the list, to "It Can't Happen Here" which rode the wave of fascist-phobia. Somehow, Mr. Lewis has managed to march with his times.

But consider "The Story of a Country Town" against the backdrop of its times. Ed Howe wrote that book when he was not quite thirty, when his days were filled from dawn to dusk with newspaper work and he was forced to struggle by lamplight, at home in the late evenings, with the unfamiliar problems of fiction. As he wrote he remembered the romantic village idyll that filled the pages of contemporary literature with wistaria and honeysuckle, and he remembered, too, the dismal pioneer village in which he had spent his own youth. He wanted to tell the truth about this kind of village.

He told it in a bitter, powerful book which was so true that no publisher would take it. When Howe finally rolled the book off his own newspaper press, in 1883, readers found a hissable villain, a beautiful girl, a heart-rending separation, and a melodramatic ride through storm and night, with bells tolling and wind shrieking. But all these ancient melodramatic devices were overshadowed by an unforgettable portrait of the great actor in the book, the village. Covered wagons no longer carried romance to this village. The hope, trust, brotherly love, optimism, beneficent nature had fallen out of the frontier eulogy. The people were tired and discontented, the men sullen and rough, the women pale and fretful. Defeatism was in the air. "I don't want to be like the people here," one character said, "for none of them are contented. . . . I cannot believe but there is a better way to live than that accepted at Fairview, and that somewhere . . . happy homes may be found, and contented people." Another declared:

> I never formed a good opinion of a man there that I was not finally told something to his discredit by another citizen, and if I said a good word for any of them, it was proved beyond question immediately that he was a very weak, a very worthless man. There were no friendships among them, and they all hated each other in secret, there being much satisfaction when one of them failed. . . . The only real ability any of them ever displayed was in looking up the previous history of each other, which they carried on with great vigor, and frequently with alarming results.

This has a familiar sound to us who have read Lewis and Masters, but it was not familiar in 1883. It was a bull in a china shop. It was an elephant in a china shop. In 1883 the local colorists were flooding the magazines with dialect, quaintness, romantic settings, Kentucky colonels, and Tennessee ha'nts. The New England renaissance had grown mellow and harmless. The favorite novels of the day were usually bound in white leather, emblazoned with gold or lavender titles. The fictional West was a land where Indians existed merely to bite the dust, where white folks lived in joyous simplicity close to nature, either in charming communities or in picturesque isolation on prairies overhung by snowy mountains. And in the midst of all this sweetness, a Middle Western small town newspaper editor dared to say in a harsh awful voice that life isn't the way books paint it.

The novel was mostly negative. But about the time when Masters, Anderson, and Lewis were discovering the Country Town, Ed Howe felt called upon to advance a positive program to improve village and small-town life, and he broadcast the program by means of aphorisms which were syndicated from Potato Hill to newspapers throughout the country. The wisdom from Potato Hill is exceedingly interesting.

"In thousands of years," saith the sage, "there has been no advance in public morals, in philosophy, religion or politics, but the advance in business has been the greatest miracle the world has ever known." Man cannot serve God and Mammon? Stuff and nonsense! Man *must* serve Mammon; dollar-chasing isn't a crime, but a virtue. Poverty is a social crime; the rich are the best citizens. "Every great improvement in the world's history is due, directly or indirectly, to

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the munificence of some man successful in the world's affairs."

For complex interpretations of life, for metaphysics and abstruse reasoning, he had little sympathy. "I do not care what Plato who lived a long time ago says. But what Joe Smith says, if he lives today, and is fairly intelligent, may be important: at least it is up to date, like a real estate abstract you can depend upon. . . . Select the wisest and best man in your community, and he knows more than Adam Smith. . . . Did Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Whitman, or Buddha, or Tolstoy, or Confucius, or Rousseau ever teach you as important lessons as you learned from your parents, from your worthy and intelligent neighbors, from the leading men of practical affairs in your own country and age?" Thoreau, Alcott, and Emerson were "Consecrated Cranks." Of Fruitlands: "Think of four robust loafers taking a music lesson the first thing in the morning, and the next enjoying a long and dreary conversation about Friendship, instead of going to work." "What we need is not shorter hours, but longer hours." "Any law enjoining me to love my enemy is too much duty. . . . A better doctrine is: 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'; except it isn't strong enough. To accord with civilized life, it should read '*Two* eyes for an eye; *two* teeth for a tooth.'" Religion, he believed, generally tends to the public good, but the time will come when "the world's religion will consist of five words: Fairness, temperance, thrift, industry, politeness."

So spoke the sage of Potato Hill, proud of his materialism. "What is wrong with materialism?" he demanded. "Nothing under God's high heaven, except that it is true."

In many ways it is an admirable doctrine that comes from Potato Hill, admirable for its sanity, common sense, practicality, simplicity. Of course, it is neither new nor unique. The same things were said by the business-man Franklin. The same things were said by the Gilded Age: keep your feet on the ground, your hand on your purse, your eye on a bargain. The same things have become familiar to us more recently through the satire of Sinclair Lewis. It is the "Pep, Punch, Go, Vigor, Enterprise" of Honest Jim Baussler in "Main Street." It is the young people of Gopher Prairie speaking: "There would be no more trouble or discontent in the world if everybody worked as hard as Pa did when he cleared our first farm." It is George F. Babbitt defining the Ideal Citizen for the Zenith Real Estate Board in terms of zip and Regular Guys and four to ten thousand a year and adding machines and bathtubs and automobiles per hundred people and distrust of professors and "intelligentsia."

What a strange commentary on the progress of human events it is that the prescription which Dr. Howe wrote out for the Country Town should be the very poison which Dr. Lewis found in Gopher Prairie and Zenith! Howe would save America by converting it to the glorious gospel of American Business; Lewis would save it by rescuing it from the standardized religion of business. Howe recommends that America be peopled with Babbitts; Lewis, that America be saved from Babbitts. Most of the aphorisms which Howe collected into a book in 1919 might have been sprinkled into Babbitt's famous speech, in 1922, without any disturbance other than a stylistic one. Agreeing on the symptoms, the two physicians still chose antithetical remedies.

So Howe was caught off base again. But he might have smiled his ironical smile this winter if he could have heard Henry Wallace making love to the small business man, if he could have heard the regionalists preaching individual initiative as opposed to mass action and urban collectivism, if he could have heard Sinclair Lewis advising the Middle West, from a Cedar Rapids lecture platform, to hold on to its Babbitts. For the chief spokesman of the revolt against Chambers of Commerce and chain-store thinking and synthetic zip no longer waves his fiery pen over the small town. The hero of "It Can't Happen Here," Doremus Jessup, is more like Babbitt than perhaps even Mr. Lewis recognizes, and in "The Prodigal Parents," the identification is complete and deliberate.

Thus the final anachronism of Howe's career is that he was taken away at the moment when it seemed that he might after all not be anachronistic.

Wilbur L. Schramm is on the faculty of English at the University of Iowa.

Machines and Medicine

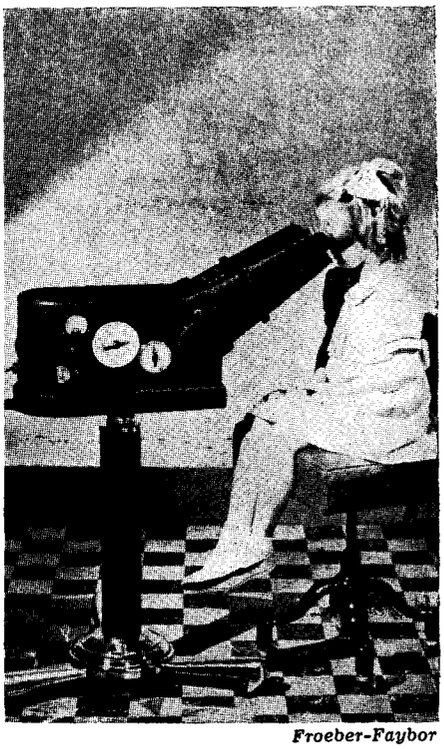
MEDICAL MAGIC. By David Dietz. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1937. $3.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH, M.D.

IT would be hard to conceive of a more successful go-between for the medical profession and the lay public than this prize winning journalist, David Dietz. He has every qualification for the job; a scientific understanding, a dramatic imagination, and a vivid style that can and does make hormones more exciting than bullets. There have been innumerable attempts to clarify the actions and reactions of the "medical magicians," and to popularize their discoveries, but few have been able to cover so broad a field in so concise and clear-cut a fashion, and none that I know has conveyed so alluringly the excitement and passion common to modern researchers.

In the last generation medical science has advanced so rapidly that it is difficult for any but the youngest graduates to keep abreast of its strides. With most of the problems of contagious diseases solved, with twenty years added to the life of the ordinary man, researchers are now turning to chemistry and physics to solve the more baffling mysteries of age, of personality, of cancer. Biochemistry is struggling to produce in test-tubes the highly complex chemical reactions of protoplasm, to take the cell apart, not only physically but chemically. Modern physics has given us the brain wave machine from whose use there seems to be emerging a new conception of an electro-magnetic pattern that in turn may solve many of the mysteries of consciousness.

It is this sort of thing that repeatedly throughout the book opens up breath-taking vistas of the possibilities that may be lying right around the corner. Yet to emphasize this feature alone is perhaps scarcely fair to the writer. He has been equally concerned with the past and with the present. He submits his material under ten heads, and we have only to glance at his table of contents to marvel at his temerity in attempting so much in one volume. Yet he succeeds, and with none of the superficiality—so common and so irritating—often encountered in "popular" books. For those who are interested enough to go further he has affixed a comprehensive bibliography.



Froeber-Faybor

TEST FOR VITAMIN A: *Measuring ability of eyes to recover from glare.*

"Medical Magic" is deserving of a more detailed review than space here will permit. This reviewer can only recommend it unreservedly to all who are perennially curious of what makes the wheels go round, to all who respond to high endeavor, and to those pessimists who complain bitterly that doctors haven't been able even to get rid of the common cold.

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The War on Crime

ROBBERY BY MAIL. By Karl Baarslag. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. $2.50.

THE CRIMINALS WE DESERVE. By Henry T. F. Rhodes. New York: Oxford University Press. 1938. $2.50.

PERSONS IN HIDING. By J. Edgar Hoover. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1938. $2.50. *(Published February 7.)*

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

WHEN Al Jennings, the bandit who became an evangelist, petitioned for his pardon: "Sure, I robbed trains," he said, "but not the one I was convicted for. No holdup man in his senses would monkey with a mail car. Why, that brings the postal inspectors down on you!" That crack about tells in general the story that is related in more detail in Karl Baarslag's "Robbery by Mail"—the story of the postal inspection detectives. It is a service more feared by the underworld than the G-men, more secret than the Secret Service, more persistent than the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. Once you have the postal inspectors after you, your chances of staying out of jail are exactly two in a hundred, as Mr. Baarslag reveals in the first book ever written about Uncle Sam's most efficient department.

He also reveals the reason for this efficiency, if one does a little reading between the lines. The problems of the service are unique, and so are its abilities; but so are its facilities, for it draws for its personnel upon the postal employees of the nation, who collectively form the staff of the "largest single business in the world." Moreover the postal inspectors have the support of the public, since the crimes which they combat are nearly always frauds of a peculiarly mean and unattractive character, such as selling tuberculosis "cures" or running phoney correspondence schools of show-card writing for the impoverished.

Not always; the perpetrator of the classic Drake estate swindle was defended by counsel whose fees were paid out of the $118,000 defense fund raised by his grateful victims. But even in this case the general public gave the law a degree of support unfortunately rare in the annals of American crime.

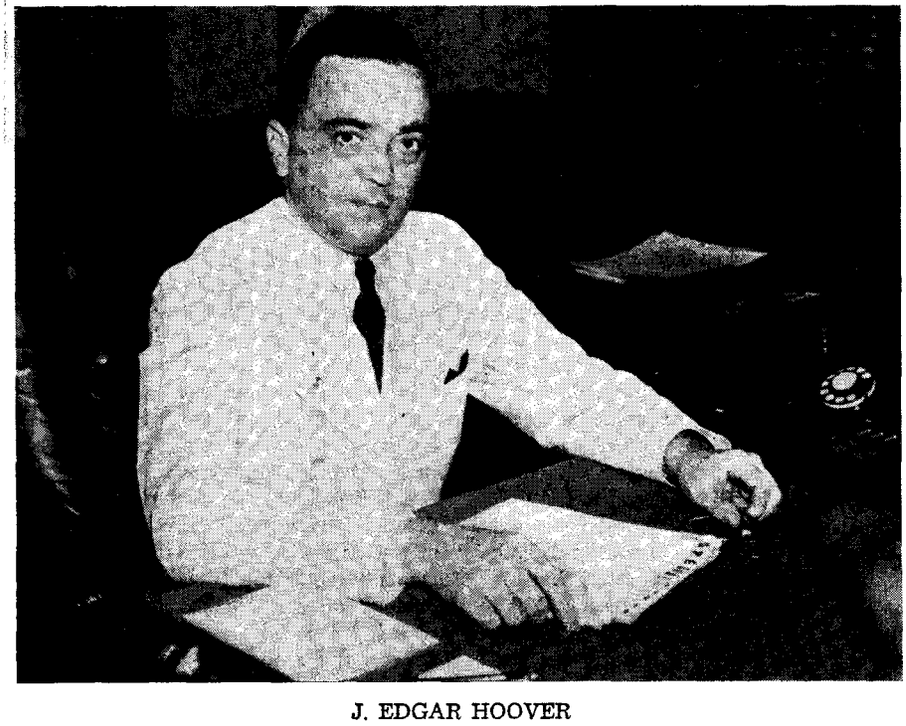
Yet this is reader's interlineation; the reader who does not wish to bother with general ideas will find in the book an infinitude of interest and even of amusement. The account of Walter Lee Bonnville, the crook who made a thousand dollars a month out of paying other people's bills, is alone worth the full price of admission, and so is that of Hohenau, the engineering swindler who "burned water" with such success as to deceive the German government.

Mr. Baarslag deserves a vote of thanks for getting these cases into type for the first time; and the Postal Inspection Service deserves another for relaxing the rule of silence it has maintained since 1753, even though it has suppressed the most interesting details in many instances and has clung throughout to its traditional policy of not telling who accomplished what in the war on crime.

There are some good anecdotes in Mr. Rhodes's "The Criminals We Deserve," but they are employed to bolster up one of the finest collections on record of erroneous data, non-sequiturs, and muddy reasoning to absurd conclusions. Mr. Rhodes believes that "the various areas in America are controlled by the big men in the kidnapping line in exactly the same way as for bootlegging"; he thinks that many American criminals escape arrest through plastic surgery; that the basic reason for lynching is the economic foundation of Fundamentalism, and that the way to end prostitution is to take the "not" out of the seventh commandment. The book is, in fact, an attempt to prop up the Marxian dialectic with data from the police records, by showing that all crime is necessarily a product of "the competitive system."

Maybe so; but it is too bad Mr. Rhodes could not have read "Persons in Hiding" before casting his own work out on a not particularly excited world. Mr. Hoover, summing up the results of the four years since the Federal Bureau of Investigation (G-men to you) entered the war on crime on a large scale, finds the outstanding general criminal characteristics to be cowardice and laziness. The blame for whatever wave of large-scale crime we have he places on you and me, who, as citizens, neglect to follow up minor crimes, and as parents neglect to train our children. Less than ten per cent of the multiple murderers, bank robbers, and kidnappers who engage the attention of the G-men come from immigrant stock, slum backgrounds, or depressed economic circumstances. The average public enemy is right out of a good middle-class American home in some small town of the Bible belt.

You are not, however, to go away with the idea that Mr. Hoover is giving you merely a solid tome on the nature of crime. It is rather a collection of case-histories, telling exactly what some of the most famous criminals of the last four years did and what the F.B.I. did to catch them. One cannot but admire the skill with which the head of that organization, without in the least detracting from the interest of his book, conceals every fact that might help a criminal keep out of his clutches. Who are the F.B.I. agents? He mentions only the names of dead ones. What is the method of search by which the G-men were able to cover every seaside resort on the Gulf in a week? How was the prodigious job of interviewing every single person Bill Mahan had ever known accomplished? There are traces of a new and formidable police technique here. Mr. Hoover does not tell us what it is, nor do we miss it; for he races straight ahead in a narrative style unornamented, precise, energetic, without heroics and without sentimentality. If the book did not concern the last of the great romantic professions, it would read like the report of a company; as it stands it makes the average detective story, with its involved plot and eccentric criminologist, look pretty silly.



J. EDGAR HOOVER

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

The Folder

Boddice-Loosening Department

AS a postscript to our note on Keats last week, let us remark how lucky we were to have done our first reading of the poet in the good old Houghton Mifflin edition which printed a good plain text without footnote variants. Suppose one were reading *The Eve of St. Agnes* for the first time in the new Oxford Press Standard Poets edition. What would be the effect, on any sensitive young reader, to find these lamentable variora printed below the poem's loveliest stanza:—

She strips her hair of all its wreathed pearl
Unclasps her bosom jewels . . .
And twists it in one knot upon her head . . .
But soon his heart revives—her praying done
Of all its wreathed pearl she strips her hair
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one
Loosens the boddice from her . . .
Loosens her bursting boddice . . .
Loosens her Boddice lace-strings . . .
Loosens her Boddice, and her bosom bare . . .
Loosens her fragrant boddice and doth bare
Her . . .
Loosens her fragrant boddice; and down slips
Her sweet attire . . .
to her knees . . .
Holograph, cancelled

What a way to spoil a poem. Keats cancelled these trial versions, and a wise editor should do the same—or keep them decently behind the curtain, in an appendix.

Maritime Department

We have held in the Folder, discourteously long, a delightful description written fifteen years ago of what is perhaps the most completely unmitigated Victorian interior decor still available on this planet. This is to be found aboard the Chilean steamers on the West Coast of South America. Mrs. M. G. (British Columbia) made some notes of a voyage in 1922; but the old Chilean steamers, except those that have piled up on various reefs, still go on much the same. M. G. wrote:—

"There are, among the ships which sail to and fro along the west coast of South America, a dwindling number of passenger boats built on the Clyde in the 80's and 90's of the last century for Latin-American trade. They are advertized in the lists of wealthy steamship companies, but they never appear in their illustrated catalogues. Old hacks of the sea, reduced to trading between one small coastal town and the next, they are the byword of South American travellers. Gone is their glory and their prime, but the burden and the heat of the day still is theirs. One travels by them perforce, if necessity dictates it, and even grows, if one is a West-coaster, to regard them with an affectionate tolerance.

"The twentieth century with its aggressive standardization had made small impression upon our ship. Luxuries, modern conveniences and the set beauty of interior decoration were not. The dining-saloon contained twelve tables capable of each seating twelve people. Its walls, panelled with scenes of inlaid coloured woods representing South American fruits and flowers, were embraced by a velvet-upholstered seat which ran their length and was to prove popular to the victims of mal de mer. At one end was a huge buffet-bar where thirsty visitors always congregated whenever we were in port. It was not a pleasing room aesthetically but it was both clean and comfortable. I have seen far worse.

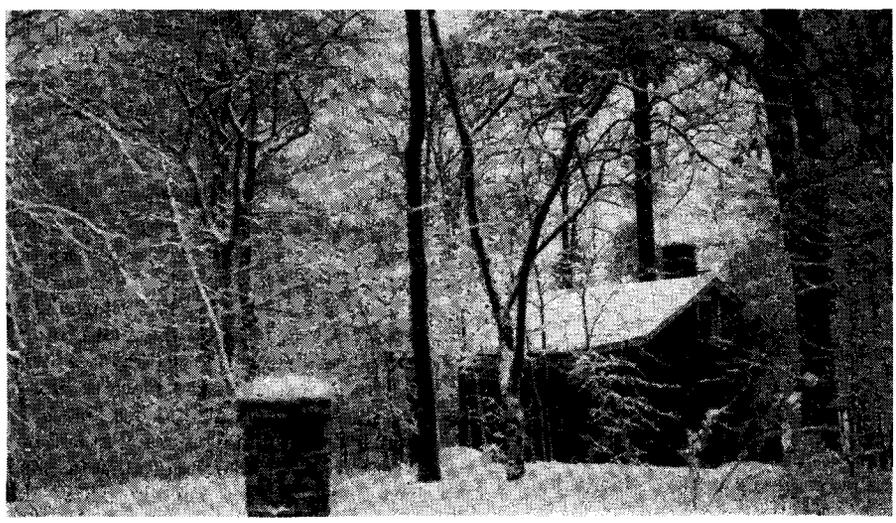
"The drawing-room was a nightmare at which we shuddered and fled and never entered again. Stamped velvet hangings edged with ball fringe, a Brussels carpet whose cabbagy pink and purple roses had in no wise been subdued by the flight of time, two cabinets containing rococo china vases and gilded ornaments dear to the period, stuffed armchairs with spindle legs and unrelenting backs, two tête-à-tête sofas, all proclaimed the Victorian era in a discordant and weary cacophany of yellows, pinks, and blues. On three shelves were the battered relics of an ancient and stodgily respectable collection of English novels and essays into whose outraged presence the Marquis de Valle Inclan, Anatole France and a few much-thumbed copies of *Le Rire* had found their way. An upright piano of very ancient vintage balanced one side of the room against a still more odious gramophone on the other. . . .

"Half a dozen passengers had come aboard. I came into contact with one the next morning, a native son of Paita. To me, the only great inconvenience from which we suffered was the daily walk to one's bath, down the length of the deck, submitting to a barrage of inquisitive glances. On the day in question, I found the way augmented by several of the newcomers. Hastening my pace, I turned into the narrow covered passageway running the length of several bathrooms, and almost stumbled over a *caballero* seated on a bench against the wall. He was immaculately groomed, I was not, and he eyed me with interest and showed every intention of remaining.

" 'Señor,' I said in a more-sorrow-than-in-anger tone, 'Can you not read the sign over the door that says these bathrooms are for the use of ladies only?'

" 'Señora,' replied he, with equal firmness and on a note of injured dignity, 'I have no intention of bathing here. It is my wife who is bathing, and I await her to escort her back to her cabin.'

"I was speechless before such connubial devotion, and realizing that no eloquence of mine could shatter it, I clasped my sponge and towel to me and fled back to my cabin. From its shuttered privacy I soon had the satisfaction of seeing the jealous husband and his Susanna pass, he darting fierce glances from side to side to warn off frail humanity, she on his



KNOTHOLE IN WINTER

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arm, fat, forty, alas not fair, curves hid by a voluminously respectable dressing-gown, eyes downcast in conscious rectitude.

"On one voyage a financial expert of international repute and I, equally ardent novices at our job, endeavoured with the aid of a hammer and a monkey wrench to restore to the ship's piano some sort of tonal order out of chaos. Two hours work seemed to make confusion worse confounded. I rang for the steward.

" 'Como es eso? This piano is the very worst I have ever heard. Has it never been tuned since the ship was built?'

" 'Pero si, Señora, of course. It was tuned only a few months ago. It was a baby last voyage that did that.'

" 'A baby!' we both cried, picturing some sort of infant Hercules. 'What sort of baby? A baby grand?'

" 'O, just a baby, Señora. Its mother was very seasick and did not know what to do with the child, so she opened the lid of the piano and put it inside. It kicked a lot.' "

Midway Island

Our allusion to Stevenson's *The Wrecker* started Mr. Lauren Lyman (of the Washington staff of the New York *Times*) reading that book. Mr. Lyman has visited Midway Island from the air and makes the following report:—

SIR:—I have read *The Wrecker* with the greatest of pleasure. It was so real that I found myself trying to identify the coral beach on which the brig hung up. The birds do get in your way too and moan and screech all night long. The swimming is the finest I have ever seen and on the hottest days the sand is cool because there are no heat absorbing factors in it. The wild scrub near the center of Midway is now a shady grove of iron trees and lawn with a garden from imported earth plus guano which the cable station uses for raising vegetables. The green lawns are dotted with yellow canaries, another importation but the wild bird life is more interesting. I'm going to read the Midway description a second time and approach it by air from French Frigate Shoals as Mr. Dodd did before a driving storm in his schooner—only I will arrive from the air with my first sight of the reef some thirty or forty or maybe fifty miles away. You sight it night times eighty miles away because of the airways beacon.

How they ever found an anchorage in the lagoon I don't know because of the coral heads. The Pan American Hotel serves cocktails and you ride from the pier to the hotel and cable station in an extra sized balloon tired Ford usually killing a couple of moaning birds that like to nest in the ruts in the sand.

The goonies or gonies come from the Aleutians on October 21 for the winter and go back on June 21 and if you are a legal resident for six months you are eligible to join the "Goofy Goony Club."

All night you hear the pound of the seas on the reef and the shrieks of birds and the whirr of their wings. There are no mosquitoes. Brooks Island is grown over with a grass of some sort on which live a jackass and three jennies. The water is brackish but you can drink it if you have to without too much suffering. Rain water is better however and there seems to be plenty with the cisterns always full.

I don't see how Captain Wicks ever could work a brig out of that lagoon.

LAUREN D. LYMAN.

A Short Story

SIR:—A few weeks ago while browsing about in the current magazines at the library, I chanced upon the Autumn *Yale Review* and Wm. March's story, *The Listening Post*. In case it has not come to your attention, by all means make a mental note to read it. It is a piece of literature, pure and undefiled. It has long been a contention of mine, preached in and out of season to bored friends, that a *good* short story is very slightly below the artistic level of a lyric poem or a familiar essay. This *Listening Post* would rank with, say, such tales as *The Wish House* or *Will o' the Mill* or *The Spiral Stone*. K. F. Gerould in her recent book of essays, *Ringside Seats*, sums up the argument I have in mind, but lack the skill to express: "You have had as full and satisfying a vicarious experience as if your eyes had been offered ten times the number of pages. There is nothing left that you need to know about those men, those women, 'those suspensions, those solutions.' "

HARRY PATTERSON.

Grand Island, Nebraska

There is a poet in Wilkesboro, N. C., Mr. James Larkin Pearson, who has patiently plugged along for many years, printing and selling his own little books. His latest is called *Fifty Acres*, in which we find several charming pieces. We have space for only a few lines of his poem *Fifty Acres*:—

I've never been to London,
  I've never been to Rome;
But on my Fifty Acres
  I travel here at home.

The hill that looks upon me
  Right here where I was born
Shall be my mighty Jungfrau,
  My Alp, my Matterhorn.

A little land of Egypt
  My meadow plot shall be
With pyramids of hay stacks
  Along its sheltered lee. . . .

Here on my Fifty Acres
  I safe at home remain,
And have my own Bermuda,
  My Sicily, my Spain.

There is no price marked in Mr. Pearson's little book but we are sure he'd be glad to inform any correspondent. The New York *Times* has printed a number of his verses; he deserves encouragement.

A South American Haroun-al-Raschid

DOM PEDRO THE MAGNANIMOUS, Second Emperor of Brazil. By Mary Wilhelmine Williams. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by ISAAC GOLDBERG

IT is strange that we should have had to wait thirty-eight years after the death of Dom Pedro II for a life of him to appear in English. He thought highly of the United States; when, in 1875, he toured the country with James J. O'Kelly, correspondent of the *New York Herald*, he told the journalist, "Certainly I am a Yankee. I always go ahead." Dom Pedro was eager to meet Whittier and Longfellow; something of a poet himself, and much of a linguist, he translated into Portuguese certain poems of both these favorites. Whittier, in 1871, had saluted the Brazilian Emancipation Act, for which the Emperor had striven, with the poem, "Freedom in Brazil." Longfellow found, for his diary, a happy phrase to describe his royal guest: "a modern Haroun-al-Raschid wandering about to see the great world as a simple traveler, not king. He is a hearty, genial, noble person, very liberal in his views."

Dom Pedro II was an intellectual, as well as a geographical, Haroun-al-Raschid. Long before he was crowned, in 1840, at the age of fifteen, he had shown signs of unusual intelligence. His interests ranged the world and all the scholastic disciplines. Art and science alike appealed to him, although science was the favorite. By that same token, perhaps, he leaned rather to the moral and the practical than to the esthetic.

It is in itself a striking commentary upon the man that to read his biography is not merely to meet the usual array of generals, diplomats, and time-servers, but to encounter at almost every turn the intellectual élite of the day. The Emperor took his position seriously; to the end he loved the country that had banished him. His biographer discovers no genius in him; perhaps he was too well-rounded a personality for such distinction. He was distinguished, however, for noble qualities that made a man of this emperor as they make an emperor of any man: "modesty, simplicity . . . unwearied enthusiasm for learning, integrity, magnanimity, understanding pity, Christlike kindness. . . ."

Professor Williams's biography shares certain of these qualities. It is authoritative, and has made use of rare unpublished material, which she considers of salient value. Every page bears the marks of indefatigable research and a passion for accuracy. Her work, indeed, so far resembles its subject as to prefer to brilliancy a broad, inclusive competence.

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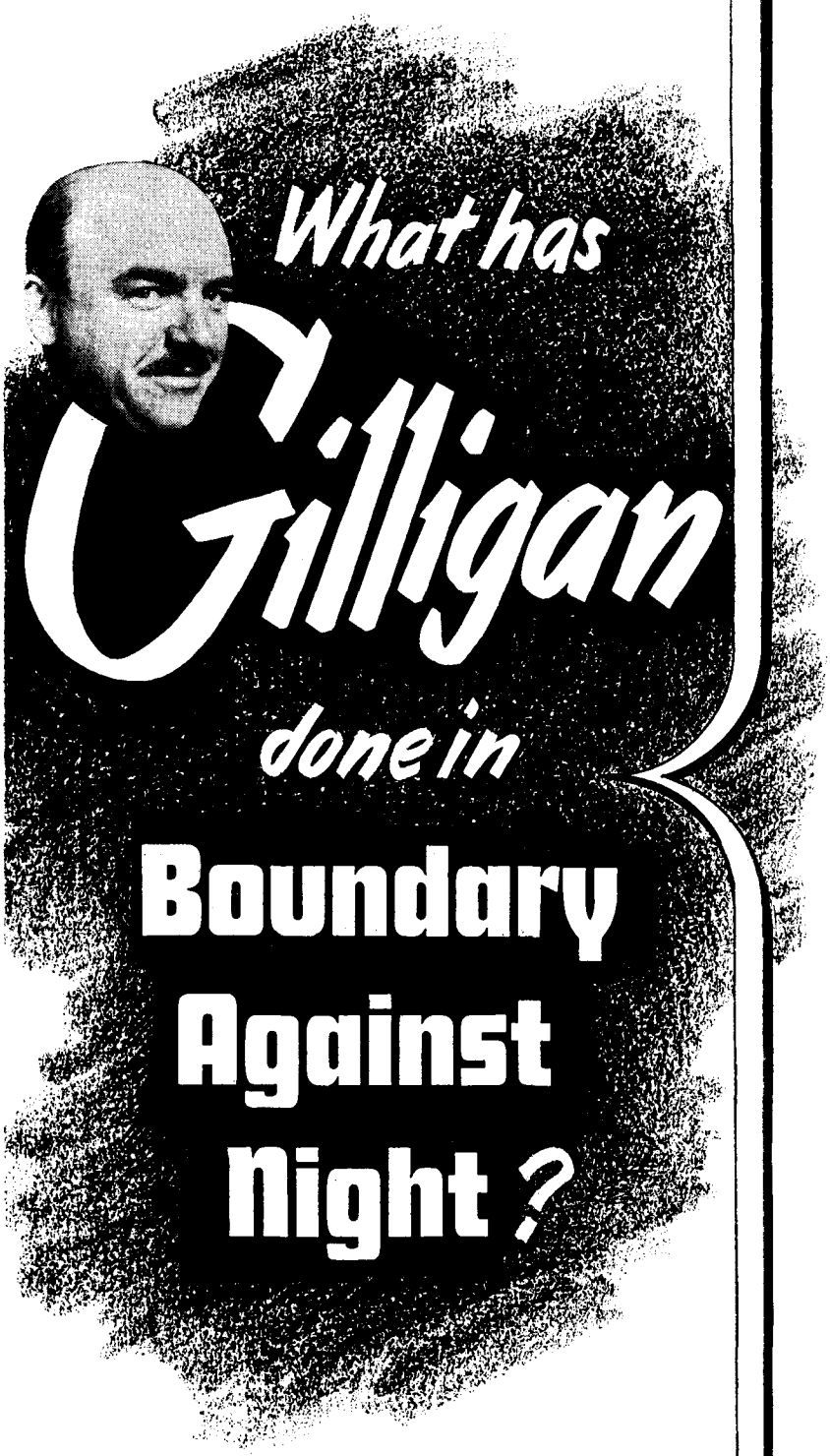

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from THE INNER SANCTUM *of*
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"SPIKE" HUNT
"It's a great thing to have a river in your blood . . ."

Last week *The Inner Sanctum* published the story of SPIKE HUNT —*One American*—*And His Attempt At An Education.*

It all began a few years ago at SPIKE HUNT's home. A group of famous correspondents had foregathered there to compare notes on "foreign wars and malice domestic"—WALTER DURANTY, WEBB MILLER, NEGLEY FARSON and others. All had written, or were writing, their life-stories, all were, or were about to become, best-sellers—all except SPIKE.

And all agreed that SPIKE'S story was crying to be told. Surrounded by his peers and affectionately stampeded by his friends, SPIKE finally broke down and confessed that he had one sentence of his autobiography completed: *"It's a great thing to have a river in your blood."*

One American is the story that sprang from that evening and that one sentence.

It has three distinguishing features, this large, sprawling, informal, typically American autobiography. In the first place SPIKE HUNT knows more people and has more friends—especially among "the giants who bestride the earth"—than almost anyone in his profession. He has always managed to get the prize assignments taking him close to the seats of the mighty.

In the second place, SPIKE HUNT writes as a small-town boy who has never forgotten or betrayed the memories of JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, the days of "Hay Skinnay!" and "The Thrill That Comes Once in a Lifetime." He has managed to keep an astounding number of small-town American attitudes intact. He has literally walked with kings and kept the common touch.

In the third place, if there is any better-loved member of "the working press" than SPIKE HUNT, *The Inner Sanctum* fails to recall his name.

And so SPIKE has created a book whose pages are peopled with friends and neighbors and fellow-human beings like LENIN, GANDHI, THE PRINCE OF WALES, PANCHO VILLA, SUN YAT SEN and literally legions of their contemporaries—a book which has inspired this tribute in *The Saturday Review* from the greatest country editor of our time—WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE:

"Fifty or a hundred years from now, maybe longer than that, when the historians are looking for a true picture of the men and the times which dominated the earth in the second and third and fourth decades of this century, they are going to go back to this book."

—ESSANDESS

From Stevenson to Pegler

(*Continued from page 4*)

ditioned by the mass average of that age. The new rhythms of prose must be its rhythms, the new vocabulary must be its vocabulary. Prose today is in the midst of an anti-"literary" revolution in many respects like the anti-"literary" revolution of English poetry a century and more ago in the age of "The Lyrical Ballads." But not in all respects. Wordsworth insisted upon the vocabularies of living men, and upon their turns of speech, but used them, except in some unhappy instances, as a new foundation for a poetic style. We have the foundations, but are not interested in style, because the mass we celebrate is not interested in style. But that is to give up one of the most precious functions of language itself, which has in all its better moments been an agent of culture, and which when shaped by literary artists has led, not followed, an imperfectly articulate society, and has been successful so long as it remained a medium between the common tongue and complete expressiveness. It may be safely said that a style of writing which is no more articulate, no more beautiful in word and rhythm, than the streets, houses, people, ideas it draws upon as subjects, is no more (and no less) valuable than the phonographic records with which we are now stocking our libraries. An example in the contrary is the great literature in classic Latin, which presumably was based on Roman moods, Roman speech, and Roman turns of thinking, but since it was carried beyond the limitations of common speech into a style (which means a life) of its own, helped more than any other agent to carry civilized thinking through the last great Depression.

But my argument is getting out of hand. I have quoted from Stevenson to show the danger of being "literary" even when beauty is attained. I shall now quote from an assortment of contemporary writing to show what happens when a tough and practical generation of writers decides that the tradesman virtues of force and clarity are the only virtues worth cultivating.

Here is a paragraph from a writer in popular science who, instead of following the tradition of a prose that has a beauty of sound and motion as one of its elements, has chosen to imitate the punch and jazz of magazine journalism:—

> This is the burden of the story. That's why this science can no longer be the cozy hobby that old Antony van Leeuwenhoek made it two hundred and fifty years ago. Compared to these present not-yet-famous-searchers, the great Dutch drygoods-store-keeper was lucky. He was no meddler with the fates of men. He was esteemed to be only a harmless peeper into an amusing new subvisible world, where cute little microscopic animals lived their astounding, silly, insignificant existences. What, in the 17th Century, did Leeuwenhoek's new microbes mean to mankind? Nothing. And so, the supremely sharp-eyed Dutchman could remain simply a discoverer. He did not have to be a fighter. His microbes were merely playthings for the fine gentlemen of the Royal Society of London.

Note the ugly piled-up adjectives by which this reporter (who is not supposed to be literary) clogs and confounds his style until it becomes as muddy as a ditch. He would have been wiser to play the sedulous ape to Huxley, or, better still perhaps, to write as his subject dictated, for enthusiasm such as his makes its own beauty.

And this from a current novel by a writer who can (when he wishes) do what he pleases with his style:—

> "Margaret Crittendon, what's the matter with you?" called her mother. "Why don't you ask these people to come in? You look as if you'd been running to a fire."
>
> "Oh, I *was* going to ask them in," said Margaret in a curious tone her mother had never heard her use before. "But you see I'm . . . I'm all excited . . . they've brought Midge back."
>
> "So they have!" cried her mother. "Splendid! That certainly *is* thoughtful of Colonel Franklin." Her estimate of that gentleman immediately soared.

This is the way elegant female novelists, who were not supposed to (and hadn't) read any literature, wrote in the early nineteen hundreds. If I am irritated by the too subtly wrought phrases of Stevenson's dialogue, I am let down by this drop below the natural beauty of emotional speech.

And here are a few sentences from an honest, factual article by a man who has something to say:—

> A large part of the public looks on union leaders as agitators who are engaged in stirring up men who prefer not to be stirred up. This conception may have some application to the organizers who are attempting to unionize the unorganized workers, because, as every experienced union man knows, the unorganized are often quite indifferent to unionism. But this concept does not fit most officers of established unions, and the situation among the employees of the X Company suggests the reason.

All I have to say here is, that if this writer wishes to lift his style to the clarity and force which come from a conviction of truth felt as well as thought, that tradesman view of writing which throws into the dump heap all craftsmanship except how to shove words into the mind, will never help him. Shall we make all our chisels into screwdrivers?

And finally a passage from that most hard-hitting, and expressive of contemporary American journalists, Westbrook Pegler:—

> WASHINGTON.—On the same day that Professor Samuel Bottomley, the economic herb doctor, was expounding his sterling remedy for the ills that afflict a world come down of its own pizen,

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your correspondent was walking down Pennsylvania Avenue at dusk, somewhat dazed by the conflict of advice submitted by the great congress of tailboard specialists called together by Senator Elmer Thomas, of Oklahoma.

From near and far they had come arunning, each with his own compound of sassafras and slippery elm, buchu and pumpwater, rhubarb and catnip. There had been one, wearing a spade beard, who made a speech and wound up with a homemade poem about a ten-dollar bill. There had been another who received only twenty per cent when his bank failed and intrusted that to another bank which also failed and paid a mere ten per cent, which he now placed in a third bank just before that one closed, too. He thought happy days would come again if the government would pay off the deposits of the bankrupt banks.

This is excellent English. I do not quote it to scorn it. On the contrary, here is what we have learned by forgetting fine writing and the polished phrase, by ceasing to be "literary." But Mr. Pegler's job needs no overtones. Mr. Pegler's style is admirable for Mr. Pegler's purposes, though even so Montaigne, or Bacon, or Charles Lamb could teach him how to make the arrow stick in the wound. Perhaps, like H. G. Wells, he doesn't want to write for even the immediate posterity that reads a second edition. But the language goes on even if its writers are satisfied to quit when the whistle blows. An English with a single rhythm, and that colloquial, and with words plucked as they come, will grow weaker, not stronger. And too many young writers, lacking his homely genius, want to write like Mr. Pegler.

No other art is so deluded. The musicians, sculptors, and painters may do what seem to be ugly things in a reaction much like the authors' against fine writing. But the technique they use is based upon the full resources of their art, and is capable of making a new beauty—wishes to make a new beauty. Architects and engineers have learned what our writers must learn. The glass and concrete box, adequate for mass living and working, has taken on rhythm and functional ornament. The automobile which ten years ago was a perfect replica of our most admired prose style—utilitarian, homely, looking like the common man that drove it,—has become perhaps the most beautiful of modern creations. It is moulded upon the rhythms of speed.

A simple statement will sum up the argument. Art in writing became decadent in the fine writing of the last century. Craft outlived art. But in our revulsion from the "literary" we have made a trade of our English prose, and when moderns like those I have mentioned have too much talent to be tradesmen only, the craft they use (and it is sometimes consummate) is pinched and flattened by the ideals of a trade. They are afraid of the sounds and the rhythms that made prose beautiful in the nineties. And rightly. But they are also afraid of beauty, which is not right, and when by chance in a strip of dialogue or a description or a phrase they attain that marriage of sense with beauty which is the gift of a great language, they will fling the nearest piece of vulgarity in our faces to prove it was an accident.

Mary Shelley

By R. Glynn Grylls

A new and definitive life of the wife of the poet, based upon new sources. Published for the first time are letters from Coleridge to Godwin, from R. L. Stevenson to Lady Shelley and the correspondence of Shelley's contemporary, Hogg. Illustrated. $7.50

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

114 Fifth Avenue New York

Miss Wells Recalls

THE REST OF MY LIFE. By Carolyn Wells. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1937. $2.75.

SURELY you don't need to be told about Miss Wells. For years she has been one of the sprightliest and cleverest light versifiers America possessed, and she is an adept at the detective story (she has always been an ardent devotee of puzzles), though she swears that Eden Phillpotts is the greatest detective-story writer. Now she reminisces of Sherlock Holmes, and the Nineties, and Oliver Herford, and Gelett Burgess and *The Lark;* talks of the chimæra of collecting, of her *Mermaid's* roster, of libraries at large, and fan mail, and "humor and me." And to her more-or-less contemporaries, she recalls the literary life of "the rare old, fair old golden days." If you want to hear some good light-hearted talk of humorists, illustrators, writing people, and a gay "literary career" of those days, sit down with this book.

The AMEN CORNER

"If writing were an effort to me I should not now be alive, but must have been *absolument épuisée;* and it might have been inserted in the bills of mortality—'dead of letter-writing A. Opie.'"

No more promising beginning to a biography coud be imagined than this passage with which Jacobine Menzies-Wilson and Helen Lloyd lead off in the Preface to their *Amelia:* The Tale of a Plain Friend,[1] which the Oxford University Press[2] published last week. Fortunately for her biographers—and for us—Amelia Opie did not become "A Plain Friend" in earnest (although brought up a Quaker) until she was well on in an extremely worldly and social life. Wife of John Opie the painter, she was intimate with Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sydney Smith, Sheridan, Madame de Staël, and Mrs. Siddons. She saw Napoleon and met Fox, Kosciuszko, Lady Caroline Lamb, Lafayette, and Sir Walter Scott. She wrote, as hinted above, quantities of letters, and was the author of quantities of poetry and many popular novels. This biography, by the authors of *March Hare,*[3] tells her entertaining story in full (with pictures).

Speaking of pictures—and of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft—we have been gazing at the charming coloured frontispiece of the new life of *Mary Shelley*[4] by R. Glynn Grylls (which also the Oxford University Press has just produced) a hitherto unpublished miniature. This book, by the way, is not only a most readable but a most important life with much new material, including letters from Coleridge to Godwin, from Stevenson to Lady Shelley, and from Hogg to the poet's family. It tells you in full "what happened afterwards" to the members of Shelley's circle. Like *Amelia*—and like so many Oxford books—it is delightfully and valuably illustrated.

From Shelley to Francis Thompson is a natural train of thought, and a new volume, *The Poems of Francis Thompson,* has just been added to the *Oxford Standard Authors,*[5] in the edition by his great friend Wilfrid Meynell.

While we are on the subject of poetry, we can recommend to the real student of poetry three rather unusual items, *Andrew Lang's Poetry*[6] by A. Blyth Webster (the annual Andrew Lang Lecture at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland); *The Art of Poetry in Iceland,* by Sir William A. Craigie[6] (the last Taylorian Lecture at Oxford); and *Some Observations on Eighteenth Century Poetry,* by David Smith[7] (the Alexander Lectures for 1937 at the University of Toronto).

And among books of new poetry there is *Reading the Spirit* by Richard Eberhart,[8] the young American who is mentioned so often in connection with Auden and Spender in England.

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Banking Dynasties

MONEY POWERS OF EUROPE IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES. By Paul H. Emden. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by MIRIAM BEARD

STRONG individuals who found businesses have received their biographic due rather better than the families destined to carry on such firms. The excitement of "pioneering" has obscured the very great and important problem of preserving continuity in business enterprise.

Occasional pictures of single business houses have been drawn before, but only recently were national "dynastic" groups studied at length. In France, M. Aymé-Martin sketched "two hundred" dominant families, while Mr. Lundberg tackled "Sixty Families" in America. Now, out of England, comes Mr. Emden's highly useful inventory of European banking firms. None of these is primarily a theoretical work. None of them compares the business family, for instance, with that of the landed aristocracy—how long can it survive without going "back to the land"? Concerned with the richest few, they do not estimate the effects of loosening family ties on modern business in general. But they lay a basis for a new discussion of the business family as an institution.

Mr. Emden's "money powers" are the chief banking houses of the past century, whose rise he traces with a lively pen and a keen but genial eye for the eccentricities as well as the talents of the mighty. His study does not follow far the uses and effects of economic power, preferring to show the development of banking technique through severe "lessons" in the shape of disasters. Some of these episodes are told well, even with elegiac charm; thus the supporters of the Greek Independence Loan of 1825, subscribing with high Homeric gusto, are shown visited with misfortunes beside which "those related in the Iliad perceptibly paled."

Without pretending to tap secret sources, Mr. Emden has drawn from unusual and diverse corners a mass of facts that will not be found elsewhere so conveniently assembled. Although by no means exhaustive—on Parisian finance, especially in later times, he has disappointingly little to say—he has illuminated the matrimonial as well as financial connections in high circles abroad. Naturally, the emphasis is on London, cynosure of bankrupt neighbors, described as sounder than ever after the storms of a century. The German material is also full and rich, extending to the great *Krach* of 1931, painted as "The Twilight of the Gods."

To these fallen "gods," audacious rivals of Lombard Street, it is obviously the author's intention to be fair and sympathetic. If the scales are a little weighted against them, it is the result of omissions rather than accusations. "Wilhelmian mentality" is deplored, Edwardian mentality is unquestioned. England's giant investments in her colonies were "creative," whereas efforts of German banks to win independence from London were "imperialistic"—indeed, the fatal word imperialistic is used loosely to describe any form of imprudent competition. Again, German bankers are shown tamely acquiescing in war preparations, but their efforts to coöperate with English bankers on the Bagdad Railway, a peace move shattered by English politicians, are forgotten. Pre-war French maneuvers are conveniently condensed, leaving German gestures uncomfortably prominent. The result might be an impression on the unwary that pre-war Teuton bankers were peculiarly belligerent. It would seem closer to the documents to picture them like their neighbors, humanly absorbed in the present profits of that golden era, happily unaware of approaching doom. Else why did they leave enormous capital so confidingly in London?

On the English side, however, Mr. Emden is chivalrously willing to concede the element of luck, which operated, along with calm good judgment, towards the London triumph. Many missteps were made in "the City," he admits, though adding, disarmingly and with perfect truth: "Only a country as wealthy and as financially sound as England could and can afford to let its financial leaders fall into such financial errors without running the very gravest risks of permanent harm."

Miriam Beard is the author of "The History of the Business Man," recently reviewed in these columns.

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The Asiatic Huns

JAPAN DEFIES THE WORLD. By James A. B. Scherer. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

THE Huns are with us again! The reservoir of dislike and fear of Japan —normally confined to California, the Hearst papers, and retired admirals —has overflowed since the outbreak of hostilities in the Orient and deluged America with vituperation and remonstrance; from lecture platform, printing press, and cinema projector have come torrents of denunciation. Styles in villains, like styles in ladies' hats, seem to repeat themselves, for the monsters of 1914 once more stalk the landscape. The utter depravity of the aggressor is again being proved by carefully footnoted references to his history, philosophy, politics, and even sex habits. As the battered *Panay* joins the *Maine* and the *Lusitania* in their watery Valhalla, the emotional milieu for another crusade on behalf of democracy and peace is being created before our eyes. Such a repetition of history would form a fascinating study in social psychology, were not the possible consequences so alarming. However reprehensible Japanese conduct may appear, it is necessary that we judge the situation and formulate our policy on rational grounds. Whatever action, if any, the United States eventually takes against Japan—protest, boycott, embargo, blockade, or war—should be motivated by common sense rather than sentiment.

The most complete and up-to-date vilification of Japan at present available will be found in this volume by Dr. Scherer, who has been writing about the country for almost thirty-five years. Studded with such words as "fascism," "gangsters," "madmen," "depraved Samsons," "running amuck," and "murderous onslaughts," this survey of Japanese history and culture ranks with the most extreme of World War literature. Both emperors and geisha-girls are introduced to prove the inherent immorality of the Japanese, whose life appears to begin with prostitution and end with hari-kari. The several chapters which are devoted to Japan's economic and political organization are crammed with misinformation and oversimplification. The whole question of "over-population" is dismissed with scorn, and the crucial conflict between light and heavy industry completely overlooked. Dr. Scherer's most original contribution is the discovery of a fantastic super-dictator, General Minami, who directs the destinies of Japan by remote control from Korea. The author concludes that democracy ("The thing to be remembered about Russia is that it is marching toward democracy") is menaced by the Three Tyrants—Mussolini, Hitler, and Minami—who have read too much of Machiavelli. In penance for its "criminal" assistance to the Japanese invasion, the United States is urged by the author to apply boycotts and embargoes on behalf of civilization.

In these trying days, with two wars raging and others threatening, writers on international affairs bear a heavy responsibility for presenting accurate information, thoughtful analysis, and sober opinion. Dr. Scherer has done American public opinion a great disservice by publishing muddled moralism under the name of scholarship.

James Frederick Green is on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association.

Finnish Master

JEAN SIBELIUS. By Karl Ekman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by PAUL H. LANG

THE many admirers of the Finnish composer will, no doubt, welcome Karl Ekman's book. A retiring and unostentatious artist, Sibelius does not like publicity and ballyhoo, and has succeeded in escaping the profuse literary attention that is paid to some of his colleagues. Thus the book will serve a useful purpose in adding a personal touch to the rather vague epithets lavished on the composer of northern legends.

The literary critic and student of music, being more inquisitive, will, however, wonder when comparing the contents of this book, written with very modest literary skill, with the statement appearing on the jacket—"the greatest contemporary composer,"—how the author, Mr. Newman, whose foreword opens the biography, and the publicity department of Mr. Knopf arrived at such categorical simplicity of evaluation. For the book does not present anything beyond simple facts arranged in a chronological order, a few interesting quotations from the composer's diary and letters, a complimentary chapter on America, and some welcome photographs. It does not add to our knowledge of Sibelius's music, supported so far mainly by semi-journalistic appreciation, and it does not supply us with a biography in the accepted meaning of the word. The author's literary procedure reminds one of Eckermann's, but instead of the Goethean "Gespräche" which reflect the poet's opinions and artistic creeds, we read mostly perfectly harmless generalities, and Mr. Ekman's Sibelius looms as the admired giant of a proud little country instead of one of the significant composers of our day. His greatness is accepted, but never motivated in terms of art criticism. The biographer speaks of the great works in a purely adulatory fashion not even admitting the possibility of a critical approach. Thus when he feels the necessity of justification or apology, we listen to the most naive vindication:

> [The "Valse Triste"], a work the fascination of which is certainly not based on such cheap qualities as one might be tempted to believe in view of its exceptional popularity. . . .

A biography and a serious monograph devoted to Sibelius and his music is still very much needed. The Finnish master is far too serious an artist to merit the Hollywood title conferred on him by well meaning amateurs. We still cannot divest our musical life of Barnumism, and by insisting on a hierarchy of composers, conductors, and musicians in general, we do injustice to all concerned.

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The New Books

Biography

POPE PIUS THE ELEVENTH. By Philip Hughes. Sheed & Ward. 1938. $3.

It has not been generally recognized that in the last sixteen years the Papacy has become considerably more of a power in the world than it had been for many years previously. And this in a time when Catholicism has been all but banned in Russia, Germany, Mexico, and exists only under suffrance in Loyalist Spain and in Fascist Italy. This assertion of the power of the Papacy has been the work of Pope Pius XI, of whom Father Hughes, the author of the best modern history of the Church, here presents a brief biography, which is as complete as any can be when the records of many of the matters discussed will not be available to scholars until a hundred years hence. Without indulging in rash generalization, Father Hughes claims that the present Pontiff will go down in history as the greatest pope, with the exception of Leo XIII, since the seventeenth century. His narrative tends to give strong support to his claim.

Achille Ratti, now known as Pius XI, cames from Lombard peasant stock. His family were devout Catholics, and each generation numbered at least one priest. He was precociously brilliant as a youth, and early attracted the attention of Leo XIII by his brilliance as a student of philosophy. Much of his life was spent as a scholar and student of history, on the staff of the Ambrosian Library at Milan, of which he was later head, and of the Vatican Library. He has steered the Papacy with notable success through some of its most difficult years, and by his official utterances made himself known as one of its greatest spokesmen. Father Hughes tells his story clearly and vividly, and documents his statements meticulously.

M. W.

Fiction

MONPTI. By Gábor Vaszary. Knopf. 1938. $2.50.

The title of this translation from the Hungarian is not Hungarian but French: a contraction of "mon petit." The purpose of the novel is to present the tragi-comic charm of Bohemian life and love in Paris, as experienced by the young Hungarian who tells the story in the first person. Whether or not you feel the charm is largely a matter of taste. The young Hungarian is the most desultory character in fiction since Oblomov; for quite a while nothing happens except his observations of a rat in the courtyard of his hotel. He tries after a fashion to get a job, but what he lives on is never made clear. In the course of time he meets Anne-Clare in the Luxembourg gardens; they fall in love, and are usually on the point of becoming lovers, but Anne-Clare always puts "Monpti" off. The rest of the book consists largely of their conversations. The quality is that of a Hungarian comedy which has not quite survived translation; but the conclusion, which is not comic at all, comes as a shock. The author may be classified, not too inexactly, as a sort of long-winded Hungarian equivalent of William Saroyan.

G. S.

HALF-HOLIDAY. By Edith Everett Taylor. Dutton. 1938. $2.

Conceived as a set problem in character mathematics, this novel presents three women of widely differing temperaments, possessed of as many equally diverse husbands. The author sends the husbands on a fishing trip and drowns all three of them. She then devotes the rest of the book to working out the question of how each woman, under the given rules of her nature, would react to the news of her husband's death. As might be expected, the resulting story is not wholly spontaneous. Mrs. Taylor cheats a bit by concentrating all her sympathy on the sole happily married woman in the lot. Tiresome Mrs. B is a mere hysterical caricature; unfaithful Mrs. C serves only as contrast and heroine of a disconnected subplot. A new and unexpected element is introduced by killing off the most interesting and vital person in the book, an aviator who goes out to look for the

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The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
DEATH WEARS A WHITE GARDENIA *Zelda Popkin* (Lippincott: $2.)	Dept. store credit mgr. strangled. House sleuths, male and female, uncover blackmail, philandering, and, somewhat reluctantly, the killer.	Mercantile background capitally drawn in expert and pleasantly disrespectful fashion: detectives are believable, and conclusion quite a shock.	Good!
THE HOLLOW SKIN *Virginia Swain* (Farrar and Rinehart: $2.)	American Dr. invalided to Bahaman isle encounters mystery, triple murder, and deviltry involving both whites and natives.	Inexplicable and ancient evil permeates yarn from beginning, rising through Rossinian crescendo to climax that stands hair on end.	Horrific
DANCE OF DEATH *Helen McCloy* (Morrow: $2.)	Burning hot corpse of deb in snow drift starts Insp. Foyle and psychiatrist Willing on trail of diabolical and elusive killer.	Among the few appearances of Freudian theories in mystery tales, and certainly debut of "hydroxy di-nitrobenzene 1, 2, 4" as weapon.	Above average
NEW YORK DETECTIVE *E. L. Van Wagner* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50) (Non-fiction)	Retired N. Y. Inspector tells how dicks are trained and describes numerous exciting cases.	No masterpiece of composition, but simplicity of narration in certain gruesome instances will make ichor turn gelid.	Instructive

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lost men. Finally, the author solves her problem rather unfairly, thereby reducing the whole plot to painful farce.

This is a pity, for Mrs. Taylor opens her story memorably, conveying the St. Augustine atmosphere with a few simple, accurate strokes, then analyzing the feelings of her principal heroine with sensitive care. Evidently this author can write, but cannot yet manage a plot comfortably. The present story is curiously lumpy; in addition, it alternately skimps important episodes and gives undue space to minor ones. But this novel is not run-of-the-mill stuff. It has character, and it is to be hoped that the author will put less mathematics and more life into her next plot.

T. P., JR.

Miscellaneous

AN ATLAS OF CURRENT AFFAIRS. By J. F. Horrabin. Knopf. 1938. $1.50.

This little classic for those who prefer to acquire their background knowledge of international relations quickly and painlessly is being kept thoroughly up to date by the inclusion of timely maps and textual data. Spain and the Western Mediterranean, Palestine, China, and India receive new and more detailed treatment in the 1938 edition. Here Horrabin has scored again in his attempt to provide a skeleton guide to his subject by rigid application of what he terms "the art of leaving out."

D. H. P.

WHY PAY TAXES? By David Cushman Coyle. Washington: National Home Library Foundation. 1937. 25 *cents.*

This is the fifth of Mr. Coyle's sermons in book form on political economy (we are coming to realize that the earlier name of that branch of learning was the better one), and it displays his usual lucidity and force. Taxation, said Justice Holmes, is a privilege, not a burden; because, Coyle elucidates, it enables you "to buy dozens of services and conveniences at low rates—wholesale instead of retail." Even with all the wastes included—war costs, graft, governmental inefficiency—"your tax bill as a whole is an economy, not an extravagance."

He believes also in using taxation as an instrument of public policy—a practice, he observes dryly, begun by the First Congress on the initiative of Alexander Hamilton; and because his policies are not quite the same as Hamilton's, his doctrine of the therapeutic value of high income taxes has been violently assailed. But he is a pretty good assailer himself, and at least forces his critics, if they are to convince anyone who has read him, to come out into the open with their real arguments. In the famous case of the 148 different taxes that go into the price of a pair of overalls, for instance, Coyle observes that this "is like saying that when you put your head out of doors, your face is heated by the fires of every star in the sky. It is, but not enough to notice." And on the argument that big income taxpayers pass the tax on to their customers, he comments that if this were so, they would not be so excited about the rates in the higher brackets.

Especially is he worth reading on the two taxes now most vigorously debated. That the undistributed-profits tax in its present form has many faults and some injustices he admits; and he may overestimate its merits. But his analysis of this and the capital-gains tax is more disinterested than most of those offered to Congress and the public, and whether his reasoning persuades you or not, you will find that he blows away a lot of smoke screens.

E. D.

MOSQUITO COAST. By Peter Keenagh. Houghton Mifflin. 1938. $3.50.

In a foreword which begs the reader to draw no learned conclusions from his book, Mr. Keenagh makes a point of disclaiming any scientific knowledge. It was purely a matter of adventure when he and his cousin, on vacation from Oxford, undertook to penetrate the wilderness of northern Honduras.

Mr. Keenagh is a competent and extremely clever writer. All the literary attributes of the tropics come to life in his description of the many weary weeks they spent paddling up the unexplored Patuca into the heart of such a darkness as Conrad first discovered along the Congo. The weeks pass, the river unfolds, time and distance gradually lose meaning. It must be noted here, however, that Brewer's Lagoon, given as two hundred miles long in the text, is less than twenty on the accompanying map, and that the length of the Patuca from its mouth to the junction with Tom-Tom Cut-off cannot be more than twenty-five miles (fifteen as the crow flies) if the map is right, though the text gives one hundred. Unfortunately, the photographic records which the travelers made of the wild tribes of the interior fell overboard and were lost; thus the illustrations are mostly of the Bay Islands and the coast itself.

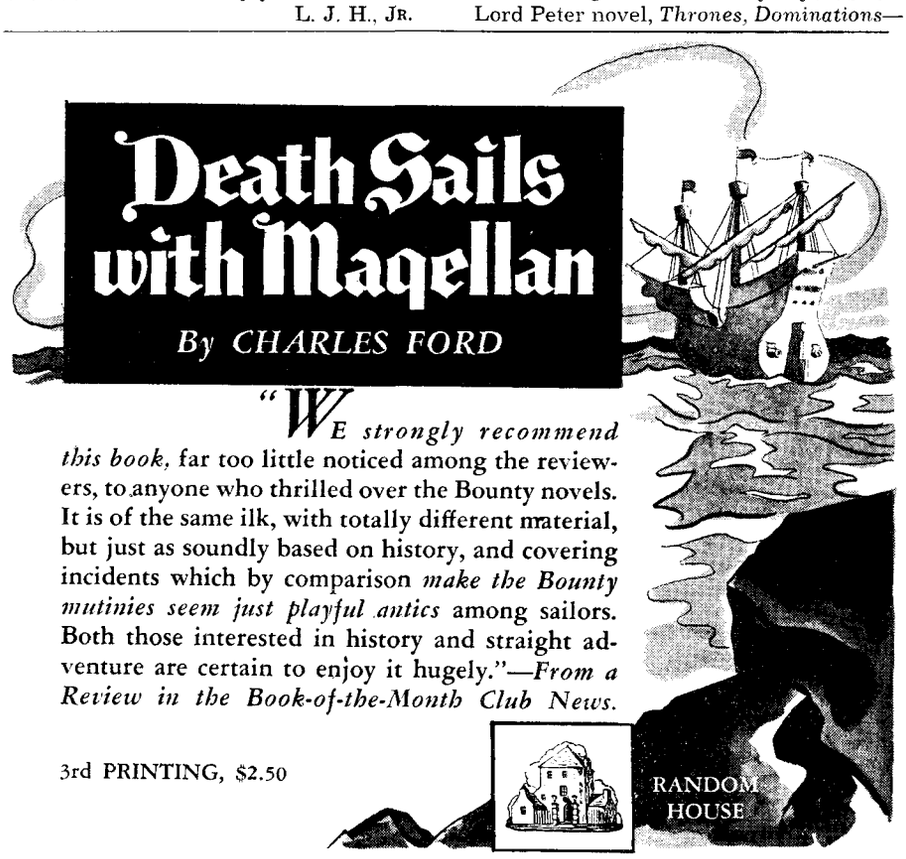
This book has the quality of good adventure-fiction, and should be read as such for maximum enjoyment.

L. J. H., JR.

Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

IT requires something short of crystal-gazing to predict that Aline Bernstein's novel, *The Journey Down* (Knopf, Feb. 7) will be high on the agenda for literary tea discussion. ☞Title dept.—*Bow Down to Wood and Stone* by Josephine Lawrence (see page 7) originates in the hymn *From Greenland's Icy Mountains.* ☞J. Edgar Hoover (see page 12) and his publishers, Little, Brown, were hosts to a group of 25 prominent booksellers who went to Washington on Tuesday for a personally conducted tour of the F. B. I. offices. ☞The American Institute of Graphic Arts sponsors the first U. S. exhibition of present-day British Calligraphy and Illumination, to be held from Feb. 2 to Feb. 26 at the British Empire Exhibition Hall, 5th Ave. at 50th St., N. Y. C. ☞Lilian T. Mowrer is skiing in Switzerland while her publishers (Morrow) are arranging for Scandinavian and Dutch editions of her recent book *Journalist's Wife.* ☞According to Columbia University Press's *Pleasures of Publishing,* the digest magazine is almost 200 years old: Benjamin Franklin printed excerpts from books, sermons, and other periodicals in his *General Magazine* in 1741. A facsimile edition of the *General Magazine* has just been issued by the Facsimile Text Society. ☞Good reading for a long winter evening: Victor Gollancz's "First Spring List 1938," a publisher's catalogue running to 152 pages, and written *con amore.* The list is presented with a dynamic variety that makes all the books on it look exciting. Phyllis Bentley's new novel gets two and a half pages of description, Joyce Cary's *Castle Corner* almost four; while Hervey Allen's *Action at Aquila* and Dorothy Sayers's new Lord Peter novel, *Thrones, Dominations*—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RANDOM HOUSE

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are displayed with no description at all. ☞The Bread Loaf Writers' Conference offers four fellowships to young writers for the 1938 session. Fellowships cover tuition and living expenses. Writers may not apply for themselves but must be recommended by a publisher, a literary agent, or an established and reputable writer. Nominations should be sent to Theodore Morrison, Director, 9 Avon Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Former fellowship holders include Josephine Johnson, Fletcher Pratt, James Still, Isabel Wilder, and Frances Woodward.

☞The Rochester (N. Y.) Historical Society issues *Extracts from the European Travel Journal of Lewis H. Morgan*, edited by Leslie A. White. Morgan spent 13 months in Europe during 1870-71; his is one of the earliest European travel journals written by an American ☞Among various spring books to which the Q. Associates are looking forward is W. Somerset Maugham's *The Summing Up* (Doubleday, Doran, March). Also Clyde Brion Davis's *The Great American Novel* (Farrar & Rinehart, April). And C. Day Lewis's new novel, *Starting Point* (Harpers, Feb.). ☞Coward McCann seem to have cornered the market on novels by dramatists. After publishing Elmer Rice's *Imperial City* last fall, they now announce Philip Barry's *War in Heaven* for March 21. Four days earlier Harcourt, Brace will publish *Hope of Heaven* by John O'Hara. ☞Perhaps these boys should get together.

☞How are the Camphire Girls getting on, that social sorority of young female booksellers in Chicago? ☞Little, Brown are issuing a very interesting paper-bound essay, *Bernard DeVoto, A Preliminary Appraisal* dealing with the ideas, contentions and writings of the Editor. It is by Garrett Mattingly. ☞George Frisbee, the anti-Bard of San Francisco, will be sorely disturbed to hear that Professor Leslie Hotson has been granted 1½ years leave from Haverford College to continue his research, "to draw the net closer about Shakespeare."

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THIS CHANGELING is too ridiculously young to be down to a halfpenny, with a few coals on the hearth and the kitten crying for milk. She implores you to see that she can be not only an intent secretary, facile of pen and glib about pets Amiel, Shakespeare, and Bach; but she can turn the parlor into a Queen's croquet ground whenever you say. Schooling begot the skill; blood the Bach; tragedy the nonsense. Even the effete Muses agree that such a triplet should not perish! Signed: pensively, Shorn.

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Double-Crostics: No. 202

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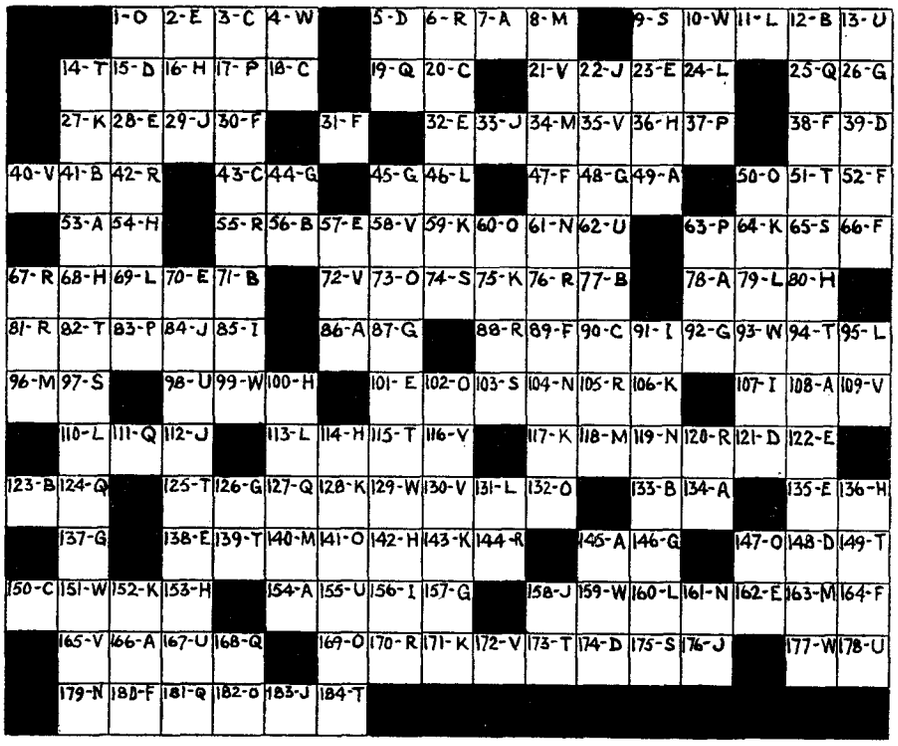

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-three words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 18 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. One of the Canterbury Pilgrims (3 wds.).

B. Town in Massachusetts.

C. Opera by Charpentier.

D. Author of Biglow Papers.

E. Restraints.

F. Poem by Browning (2 wds.).

G. Transformation.

H. Study of trees.

I. English Poet Laureate (1715-1718).

J. Steady.

K. One of the patriarchs.

L. Austrian statesman (1773-1859).

M. Opera by Weber.

N. Last Beethoven Symphony.

O. Distracted.

P. Kind of spice from nutmeg.

Q. Premier of England (1908-1916).

R. Characteristic.

S. Periodical containing critical articles.

T. Son of Saul (Bib.).

U. Sacred scriptures of the Sikhs.

V. Home of Sir Walter Scott.

W. Author of "Up Stream" (1882—).

WORDS

78 86 154 49 166 7 53 145 134 108

123 56 71 41 133 12 77

150 20 43 3 18 90

39 121 148 15 174 5

162 122 2 28 32 135 138 23 57 70 101

31 38 47 89 180 164 66 30 52

157 126 87 137 44 48 92 146 45 26

100 16 136 153 68 114 36 80 142 54

91 156 107 85

33 158 84 183 22 29 176 112

117 152 59 143 128 171 106 27 75 64

113 69 160 131 95 24 46 11 110 79

140 34 8 96 118 163

61 104 179 119 161

169 60 147 102 73 50 141 182 132 1

17 83 63 37

111 19 127 181 25 124 168

67 6 55 76 120 42 81 144 170 105 88

103 97 175 65 74 9

51 14 94 125 173 115 82 149 184 139

62 155 98 178 167 13

130 35 72 40 116 172 21 109 58 165

151 129 93 177 4 159 10 99

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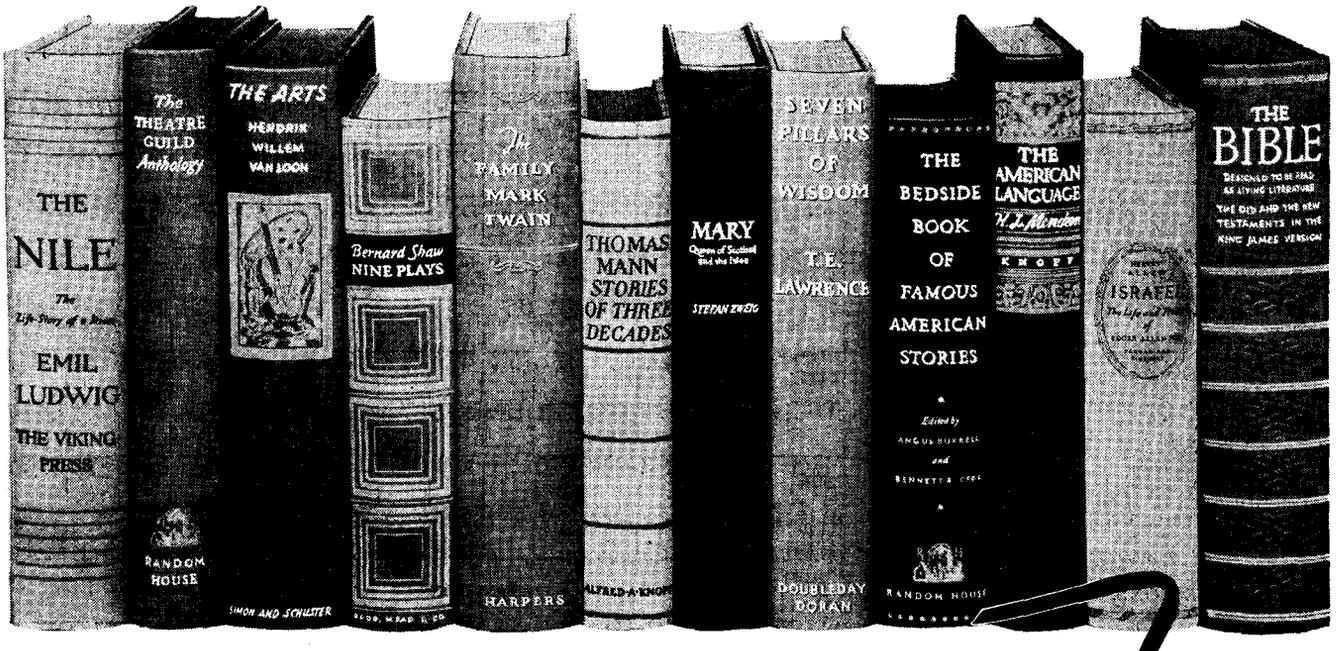

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